THE BOOK-LOVER'S ENCHIRIDION

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The Book-Lover's Enchiridion:

A TREASURY OF THOUGHTS
ON THE
Solace
AND
Companionship
OF
Books,

GATHERED FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE
GREATEST THINKERS, FROM
CICERO, PETRARCH, AND MONTAIGNE, TO
CARLYLE, EMERSON, AND RUSKIN.

BY
Alexander Ireland,

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIR AND RECOLLECTIONS OF
RALPH WALDO EMERSON;"
ETC., ETC.

London:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.
W. & R. CHAMBERS.
1888.

"*Infinite Riches in a little room.*"

"*Indocti discant et ament meminisse periti.*"

"*He that reades, as it were, for a wager, though he miss never a word, shall miss almost all the matter: whereas the studious, and insisting Reader, reads more than peradventure a hundred others.*"—EDWARD BLOUNT: "Horæ Subsecivæ," 1620.

6559
24/11/90

PREFACE.

My object in this volume has been to present, in chronological order, a selection of the best thoughts of the greatest and wisest minds on the subject of Books — their solace and companionship, — their efficacy as silent teachers and guides,—and the comfort, as of a living presence, which they afford amidst the changes of fortune and the accidents of life. I was led to undertake this labour of love by the consideration that no one had hitherto attempted to give to readers any adequate collection of thoughts on this special subject. The field was, in fact, unoccupied. During the miscellaneous reading of more than fifty years, I had met with many striking passages about books. Of these I took note at the time, transcribing them carefully, and garnering them for possible future use. In the course of years the collection assumed a considerable bulk, representing many pleasant excursions into the fields of literature—many happy hours of studious leisure. It often struck me that, if revised and published, the selection would be acceptable to a large class of readers. I therefore decided to set about my long-contemplated task, and a few years ago published the first edition of "The Book-Lover's Enchiridion." In a note following this preface is given a detailed account of the various editions of the work.

The writers of the present century have, it will be observed, contributed most largely to the general store of thought and reflection, to which this volume is specially devoted. I have not confined myself to any particular class of authors, but have welcomed every good and worthy thought about books, from whatever source derived. Whenever a suitable passage was met with in the course of my reading, I have not hesitated to adopt it, whoever may have been its author. In the pages of this volume the reader will find himself in a very mixed company. Archbishops, bishops, and learned orthodox doctors of both churches, mingle with historians and men of science, nonconformist divines, idealists and social reformers, novelists and critics, essayists grave and gay, and philosophical writers of every shade of heterodoxy. The sons and daughters of song form part of the gathering, and add to its variety. Heterogeneous although it may be, there is, nevertheless, a remarkable harmony of opinion among its members on one subject. For a time, differences have disappeared. The acrimony of controversy has subsided, and the strife of creeds, no longer heard, ceases to disturb us. From the motley assembly there comes a united chorus in praise and honour of books. The reader, after listening to Montaigne, or Erasmus, or Bishop Hall, or Richard Baxter, or Isaac Barrow, or John Milton, or Abraham Cowley, can pass on to Samuel Johnson, or William Cowper, or Wordsworth, or Scott, or Lamb, or William Hazlitt, or Macaulay. If he prefers the writers of our own time, he can spend many delightful half-hours over the pages of Carlyle and

Emerson, Lowell and Holmes, Ruskin, Frederic Harrison, or John Morley. Let him be careful to observe how these writers have maintained the purity, strength, flexibility, and comprehensiveness of our language—in some instances reaching a splendour and vividness not previously attained in English literature. Nor should he fail to note the various peculiarities and diversities of style—each attained and perfected by subtle processes of choice and selection—the finest outcome of a cultivated intellect. The study of style alone, afforded by these extracts, will be found not unprofitable.

I have been disappointed in not finding in the works of certain notable authors whom it was my wish to quote, any thoughts exactly suitable to my purpose. Where I had expected to give a few pages from some well-known writer, I have only been able to meet with a sentence or two worth adding to my store. This will explain the apparent disproportion in the space allotted to different authors. It may here be said that, with one or two exceptions, my material has been gathered from the original sources—the works themselves of the authors quoted—so that the accuracy of the text may be trusted.

One of the purposes of this volume is to meet certain needs and moods of thoughtful minds, which seek in books, not amusement or mere passive enjoyment, but the inspiration and quickening influence of high aims and noble purposes. I earnestly hope that it will be the means of awakening and strengthening good resolutions in the young, in the direction of manfulness and self-help; of teaching the salutary lesson—how to enjoy a little and endure much; of raising them to a higher level of thought—to a frame of mind which has no sympathy with irreverence, frivolous pursuits, or intellectual indifference. May it aid in implanting a love of literature and science, which shall beautify daily existence, however humble its surroundings, however difficult the means and opportunities for its cultivation! It is not always a disadvantage to have to contend with hindrances in the pursuit of knowledge. On the contrary, the difficulties encountered often prove a beneficent discipline, since they tend to stimulate endeavour, and call forth the power to breast obstacles and to conquer them.

In conclusion, if this volume should be found helpful to some of my readers who have passed life's meridian, or arrived at old age — some to whom anxiety, or sorrow, or ill-health has brought weary hours—it will always be a pleasant thought to me if, by the aid of its pages, the monotony of these hours has been lightened or their tediousness beguiled. Intimate communion with the minds of the wisest and most gifted of our race—the kings of thought—rarely fails to bring with it, not merely patience and hope wherewith to meet the unavoidable cares and disappointments of life, but also fortitude to bear even its worst calamities.

ALEXANDER IRELAND.

BEAUCLIFFE TERRACE,
SOUTHPORT, *June*, 1888.

NOTE ON PREVIOUS EDITIONS.

The first edition of this work was published in 1882. Within a few months a second was called for. The two editions were exhausted in less than a year. They were small in size—only 4¾ by 3 inches in measurement—and easily carried in the pocket, for ready use at spare minutes of time. Being bound in white, with gilt edges, and a pretty device on the side, the little volume had a very neat appearance, and came to be in request as a dainty gift-book. The motto was considered appropriate—"Infinite riches in a little room"—a line taken from Marlowe's play, *The Jew of Malta*. The rapid sale of two editions was evidence that the subject-matter was appreciated. I was therefore encouraged to prepare a third, in which the size of the volume was increased, and the quantity of matter nearly doubled by the addition of passages from writers of the last three centuries, which the exigences of space compelled me to exclude from the previous editions. The type used for these, although beautifully clear and distinct, was found to be too small for many readers. I therefore adopted a larger size of type for the new edition, which appeared in 1883, and consisted of nearly 4,000 copies. It was widely and most favourably noticed by the press, and I had the additional pleasure of receiving from many distinguished men of letters kind words of approval of the aim and contents of the volume. A limited number of copies were thrown off on large paper, and three appropriate illustrations were introduced—one of these being a very finely executed fac-simile of a notable letter, addressed by Thomas Carlyle to his friend Leigh Hunt on the appearance of the "Autobiography" of the latter. These special copies were soon taken up, and they are now unattainable, except when by chance one of them finds its way into a second-hand bookseller's catalogue at a fancy price. Many copies have been sold for the purpose of illustration, some of these extending to several volumes —adorned by portraits of the authors quoted, and pictures of their birth-places, homes, and haunts. Before the end of the year the third edition was sold out, and preparations made for a fourth. This gave me the opportunity of still further revision and improvement of the contents. Sixteen pages of new matter were added, and I ventured to print the large number of 5,000 copies. At the end of 1887—three years from the date of its publication—only 100 copies remained in the hands of the publishers, who accordingly intimated the necessity for a fifth edition.

During the last few years I have met with many interesting passages in the writings of authors not previously known to me. From these I have made a rigid selection, and inserted them in the text of the new edition in their proper chronological order. The net result is that the volume is now further enriched with extracts from more than forty authors hitherto unquoted. As it is my intention to make no further additions to the work, the present text may be considered as final.

My gratitude and thanks are due to several friends and correspondents who have sent me passages of interest, met with in the course of their reading, and which they considered worth adding to my volume. I have gladly made use of such of those extracts as seemed suitable.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF AUTHORS QUOTED.

	B.C.
Solomon	1033— 975
Socrates	468— 399
Alexandrian Library	300—
Plato	427— 347
Cicero	106— 41
Horace	65— 8
	B.C. A.D.
Seneca	58— 32
	A.D.
St. Paul	— 65
Quintilian	42— 115
Plutarch	46— 120
Pliny, the Younger	61— 105
Aulus Gellius	117— 180
From the Persian	—
Hindu Saying	—
Bishop Richard de Bury	1287—1345
Francesco Petrarca	1304—1374
Dominico Mancini	—
Geoffrey Chaucer	1328—1400
Thomas à Kempis	1380—1471
J. Fortius Ringelbergius	—1536
Desiderius Erasmus	1467—1536
Niccolo Machiavelli	1469—1527
Antonio de Guevara	—1544
Martin Luther	1483—1546
Roger Ascham	1515—1568
Michel de Montaigne	1537—1592
Joseph Scaliger	1540—1609
John Florio	1545—1625

Book of Common Prayer	1549
John Lylye	1553—1601
Sir Philip Sidney	1554—1586
Lord Chandos	—1621
Lord Bacon	1561—1629
Samuel Daniel	1562—1619
Joshua Sylvester	1563—1618
William Shakespeare	1564—1616
Alphonso, King of Arragon	1384—1458
Old English Song	——
A Sixteenth Century Writer	——
Ben Jonson	1574—1637
Bishop Joseph Hall	1574—1656
Archbishop de Porré	——
John Fletcher	1576—1625
Robert Burton	1576—1640
Sir Thomas Overbury	1581—1613
John Hales	1584—1656
Balthasar Bonifacius Rhodiginus	1584—1659
Francis Osborne	—1659
Leo Allatius	1586—1669
George Wither	1588—1667
Bishop Hacket	1592—1670
James Shirley	1594—1666
Juan Eusebio Nierembergius	1595—1658
Sir William Waller	1597—1668
Antony Tuckney	1599—1670
Francisco de Rioja	1600—1659
Peter du Moulin	1600—1684
Dr. John Earle	1601—1665
Sir William Davenant	1605—1668
Sir Thomas Browne	1605—1682
Thomas Fuller	1608—1661
John Milton	1608—1674
Earl of Clarendon	1608—1674
Sir Matthew Hale	1609—1676
Samuel Sorbière	1610—1670
Owen Feltham	1610—1678

Benjamin Whichcote	1610–1683
Early English Writer	—
M. Toinard	1629—1706
Jeremy Taylor	1613—1667
Duc de la Rochepoucauld	1613—1680
Gilles Ménage	1613—1692
Earl of Bedford	1613—1700
Urbain Chevreau	1613—1701
Richard Baxter	1615—1691
Dr. John Owen	1616—1683
Abraham Cowley	1618—1667
Thomas V. Bartholin	1619—1680
François Charpentier	1620—1702
Henry Vaughan	1621—1695
John Hall	1627—1656
Sir William Temple	1628—1698
Isaac Barrow	1630—1677
Charles Cotton	1630—1687
Bishop Huet	1630—1721
John Locke	1632—1704
Robert South	1633—1716
Sir George Mackenzie	1636—1691
Jean de la Bruyère	1644—1696
A Seventeenth Century Divine	—
Jeremy Collier	1650—1726
Archbishop Fénélon	1651—1715
Charles Blount	1654—1697
Thomas Fuller, M.D.	1654—1734
Viscount Lonsdale	1655—1700
Edmund Halley	1656—1742
John Norris of Bemerton	1657—1711
Jonathan Swift	1667—1745
William Congreve	1670—1729
Sir Richard Steele	1671—1729
Joseph Addison	1672—1719
Roger Gale	1672—1744
Isaac Watts	1674—1748
Conyers Middleton	1683—1750

Thos. Sheridan	1684—1738
Alexander Pope	1688—1744
Baron Montesquieu	1689—1755
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu	1690—1762
Lord Chesterfield	1694—1773
François M. A. de Voltaire	1694—1778
Matthew Green	1696—1737
James Thomson	1700—1748
John Wesley	1703—1791
Samuel Johnson	1709—1784
David Hume	1712—1776
Jean Jacques Rousseau	1712—1778
Laurence Sterne	1713—1768
Denis Diderot	1713—1789
William Shenstone	1714—1763
Horace Walpole	1717—1797
Oliver Goldsmith	1728—1774
William Dodd	1729—1777
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing	1729—1781
Edmund Burke	1729—1797
John Moore	1730—1802
William Cowper	1731—1800
Edward Gibbon	1737—1794
J. G. von Herder	1744—1803
Sir William Jones	1746–1794
Daniel Wyttenbach	1746—1820
Countess de Genlis	1746—1830
John Aikin	1747—1822
Richard Cecil	1748—1816
J. Wolfgang von Goethe	1749—1832
Tomas de Yriarte	1750—1791
Elizabeth Inchbald	1753—1821
William Roscoe	1753—1831
George Crabbe	1754—1832
William Godwin	1756—1836
Friedrich Schiller	1759—1805
William Cobbett	1762—1835
Sir S. Egerton Brydges	1762—1837

Jean Paul F. Richter	1763—1825
John Ferriar	1764—1815
Isaac Disraeli	1767—1848
John Foster	1770—1843
William Wordsworth	1770—1850
Sir Walter Scott	1771—1832
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	1772—1834
Robert Southey	1774—1843
Charles Lamb	1775—1834
Walter Savage Landor	1775—1864
T. Frognall Dibdin	1776—1847
William Hazlitt	1778—1830
Henry Brougham	1778—1868
Charles C. Colton	1780—1832
William Ellery Channing	1780—1842
John Kenyon	1783—1856
Washington Irving	1783—1859
Leigh Hunt	1784—1859
Thomas de Quincey	1785—1859
Thomas Love Peacock	1785—1866
Richard Whately	1787—1863
Isaac Taylor	1787—1865
Bryan W. Procter (Barry Cornwall)	1787—1874
Lord Byron	1788—1824
Neil Arnott	1788—1824
Arthur Schopenhauer	1788—1860
Charles Knight	1791—1873
Lord Mahon	1791—1875
Percy Bysshe Shelley	1792—1822
Sir John Herschel	1792—1871
Thos. Arnold	1795—1842
Thomas Noon Talfourd	1795—1854
Julius C. Hare	1795—1855
Thomas Carlyle	1795—1881
Hartley Coleridge	1796—1849
Connop Thirlwall	1797—1875
Thomas Hood	1798—1845
A. Bronson Alcott	1799—1888

T. B. Macaulay	1800—1859
William Chambers	1800—1883
James Crossley	1800—1883
Earl of Shaftesbury	1801—1885
Hugh Miller	1802—1856
Robert Chambers	1802—1871
Chief Justice Cockburn	1802—1880
Victor Hugo	1802—1885
E. L. Bulwer (Lord Lytton)	1803-1873
Ralph Waldo Emerson	1803—1882
Richard Cobden	1804—1865
Frederick Denison Maurice	1805—1872
Samuel Palmer	1805—1881
Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield)	1804—1881
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	1807—1882
Henry Reed	1808—1854
Caroline Norton	1808—1877
George S. Hillard	1808—1879
J. G. Whittier	1808—
Elizabeth Barrett Barrett	1806—1861
Robert Aris Willmott	1809—1862
John Hill Burton	1809—1881
Oliver Wendell Holmes	1809—
William Ewart Gladstone	1809—
Mary Cowden-Clarke	1809—
R. M. Milnes (Lord Houghton)	1809—1885
Theodore Parker	1810—1860
John Brown	1810—1882
Samuel Laing	1810—
W. M. Thackeray	1811—1863
John Bright	1811—
Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke)	1811—
Sara P. Parton (Fanny Fern)	1811—1872
Charles Sumner	1811—1874
Charles Bray	1811—1884
Francis Bennoch	1812—
John Cameron	1812—
George Gilfillan	1813—1878

Mark Pattison	1813—1884
Henry Ward Beecher	1813—1887
Anthony Trollope	1815—1882
Frederick William Robertson	1816—1853
George S. Phillips (January Searle)	1816—1882
John G. Saxe	1816—
Philip James Bailey	1816—
Sir Arthur Helps	1817—1875
Sir Stafford Northcote (Lord Iddesleigh)	1818—1887
Eliza Cook	1818—
Charles Kingsley	1819—1875
John Ruskin	1819—
James Russell Lowell	1819—
Edwin P. Whipple	1819—1886
Walt Whitman	1819—
Marian Evans (George Eliot)	1820—1881
George Dawson	1821—1876
Robert Leighton	1822—1869
Charles Buxton	1822—1871
J. A. Langford	1823—
Robert Collyer	1823—
James Hain Friswell	1827—1878
C. Kegan Paul	1828—
Edward Butler	1828—
Alexander Smith	1830—1867
W. H. Rands (Matthew Browne)	—1882
James Payn	1830—
George J. Goschen	1831—
Frederic Harrison	1831—
Earl Lytton (Owen Meredith)	1831—
Philip Gilbert Hamerton	1834—
Sir John Lubbock	1834—
Frank Carr (Launcelot Cross)	1834—
Sir G. O. Trevelyan	1838—
John Morley	1838—
William Freeland	1828—
Frances R. Havergal	1836—1879

Alexander Lamont	1843—
William E. A. Axon	1846—
Andrew Lang	1844—
J. Freeman Clarke	
Austin Dobson	1840—
Robert Louis Stevenson	1850—
Charles F. Richardson	1851—
R. H. Stoddard	
Willis Gaylord Clark	1810—1841
Cyrus Hamlin	
J. Rogers Rees	1856—
James Williams	1850—
Richard Le Gallienne	1866—

Anonymous Authors.
A Woman's Tribute to Books.
Remarks on Book-Borrowers.

PRELUDE OF MOTTOES.

These studies are the aliment of youth, the comfort of old age; an adornment of prosperity, a refuge and a solace in adversity; a delight in our home, and no incumbrance abroad; companions in our long nights, in our travels, in our country retirement.—*Cicero.*

To divert myself from a troublesome fancy, 'tis but to run to my books. They always receive me with the same kindness. The sick man is not to be lamented, who has his cure in his sleeve. In the experience and practice of this sentence, which is a very true one, all the benefit I reap from books consists. . . . They are the best *viaticum* I have yet found out for this human journey.—*Montaigne.*

Good books are true friends that will neither flatter nor dissemble: be you but true to yourself, applying that which they teach . . . and you shall need no other comfort nor counsel.—*Bacon.*

For Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve, as in a viall, the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. . . . A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life.—*Milton.*

A taste for books is the pleasure and glory of my life. The miseries of a vacant life are never known to a man whose hours are insufficient for the inexhaustible pleasure of study.—*Gibbon.*

. . . Books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good;
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

Wordsworth.

Books are the first and last, the most home-felt, the most heart-felt of all our enjoyments. . . . Actions pass away and are forgotten; conquerors, statesmen, and kings live but by their names stamped on the page of history. . . . But the dead authors are living men, still breathing and moving in their writings. . . . Intellect only is immortal, and bequeathed unimpaired to posterity. Words are the only things that last for ever.—*Hazlitt.*

In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. . . . All that Mankind has done, thought, gained, or been; it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. . . . Any good book, any book that is wiser than yourself, will teach you something,—a great many things, directly and indirectly, if your mind be open to learn. This old counsel of Johnson's is also good and universally applicable: "Read the book you do honestly feel a wish and curiosity to read." The very wish and curiosity indicates that you, then and there, are the person likely to get good of it.—*Carlyle.*

In the highest civilization the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity. Angels they are to us of entertainment, sympathy, and provocation—silent guides, tractable prophets, historians, and singers, whose embalmed life is the highest feat of art; who now cast their moonlight illumination over solitude, weariness, and fallen fortunes.—*Emerson.*

THE
Book-Lover's Enchiridion.

SOLOMON. B.C. 1033—975.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.—*Proverbs* xiii. 20.

A word spoken in due season, how good is it!—*Proverbs* xv. 23.

Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.—*Proverbs* xxiii. 12.

SOCRATES. B.C. 468—399.

Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings; so you shall come easily by what others have laboured hard for. Prefer knowledge to wealth, for the one is transitory, the other perpetual.

INSCRIPTION ON THE LIBRARY AT ALEXANDRIA. FOUNDED ABOUT 300 B.C.

The nourishment of the soul; or, according to Diodorous, the medicine of the mind.

PLATO. B.C. 427—347.

Books are the immortal sons deifying their sires.

[The following passage, comparing books with the interchange of living speech, deserves to be quoted (although on the opposite side). "Plato's tone," observes Dr. J. Martineau, "as in this passage, is invariably depreciatory of everything committed to writing, with the exception of *laws*. In the immediate context of this quotation, he complains that Theuth, the inventor of letters, has ruined men's memories and living command of their knowledge, by inducing a lazy trust in records ready to their hand: and he limits the benefit of the *litera scripta* to the compensation it provides for the failing memory of old age, when reading naturally becomes the great solace of life. The passage is touched with an indescribable tincture of pathetic humour."]

Trans. Writing has this terrible disadvantage, which puts it on the same footing with painting. The artist's productions stand before you, as if they were alive: but if you ask them anything, they keep a solemn silence. Just so with written discourse: you would fancy it full of the thoughts it speaks: but if you ask it something that you want to know about what is said, it looks at you always with the same one sign. And, once committed to writing, discourse is tossed about everywhere indiscriminately among those who understand and those to whom it is nought; and cannot select the fit from the unfit. And when maltreated and unjustly abused, it is always in need of its father to help it; for it has no power to help or defend itself.—*Dialogues: "Phædrus," quoted by Dr. J. Martineau, in "Types of Ethical Theory," vol.* i., *p.* 111.

The same passage is thus translated by Professor Jowett:—

I cannot help feeling, Phædrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives one unvarying answer. And when they have been once written down they are tossed about anywhere among those who do and among those who do not understand them. And they have no reticences or proprieties towards different classes of persons, and, if they are unjustly assailed or abused, their parent is needed to protect his offspring, for they cannot protect or defend themselves. [*The Dialogues of Plato, translated by B. Jowett, M.A., vol.* i., *p.* 711, "*Phædrus.*"]

CICERO. B.C. 106—41.

Nam ceteræ neque temporum sunt, neque ætatum omnium, neque locorum; at hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent; delectant domi, non impediunt foris; pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.—*Pro Archiâ Poetâ, cap.* 7.

Trans. For other occupations are not for all times, or all ages, or all places. But these studies are the aliment of youth, the comfort of old age; an adornment of prosperity, a refuge and a solace in adversity; a delight in our home, and no incumbrance abroad; companions in our long nights, in our travels, in our country retirement. [*Translated by R. R. Dees.*]

HORACE. B.C. 65—8.

Lectio, quæ placuit, decies repetita placebit.—*De Arte Poet., line* 365.

Trans. The reading which has pleased, will please when repeated ten times.

O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit,
Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis,
Ducere solicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ? *Sat.* II.

Trans. O country, when shall I behold thee? When shall I be permitted to enjoy a sweet oblivion of the anxieties of life, sometimes occupied with the writings of the men of old, sometimes in slumbrous ease, or tranquil abstraction? [*Translated by R. R. Dees.*]

SENECA. B.C. 58—A.D. 32.

It does not matter how many, but how good, books you have.

Leisure without study is death, and the grave of a living man. . . . If you devote your time to study, you will avoid all the irksomeness of this life; nor will you long for the approach of night, being tired of the day; nor will you be a burden to yourself, nor your society insupportable to others.

He that is well employed in his study, though he may seem to do nothing, yet does the greatest things of all others.—*Epist.* 15, 82, 84.

The crowd of teachers is burdensome and not instructive; and it is much better to trust yourself to a few good authors than to wander through several.—*De Tranq. An.* 9.

PLUTARCH. A.D. 46—120.

We ought to regard books as we do sweetmeats, not wholly to aim at the pleasantest, but chiefly to respect the wholesomest; not forbidding either, but approving the latter most.

AULUS GELLIUS. *cir.* 117—180 A.D.

The things which are well said do not improve the disposition of the young so much as those which are wickedly said corrupt them.—*Noct. Att.* 12, 2.

QUINTILIAN. A.D. 42—115.

Reading is free, and does not exhaust itself with the act, but may be repeated, in case you are in doubt, or wish to impress it deeply on the memory. Let us repeat it; and—just as we swallow our food masticated and nearly fluid, in order that it may be more easily digested—so our reading should not be delivered to the memory in its crude state, but sweetened and worked up by frequent repetition.—*Inst. Orat.* 10, 1.

Every good writer is to be read, and diligently; and, when the volume is finished, is to be gone through again from the beginning.—*Id.* 10.

The reader should not at once persuade himself that all things that the best writers have said are absolutely perfect.—*Id.* 10. [*Translated by J. N.*]

PLINY, THE YOUNGER. A.D. 61.

d. AFTER 105.

The elder Pliny used to say that no Book was so bad but that some part of it might be profitable.—*Epist.* 3.

They say we should read much, not many things.—*Id.* 7.

ST. PAUL. A.D. 65.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.—*Romans* xv. 4.

All may learn, and all may be comforted.—1 *Corinthians* xiv. 31.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

A wise man knows an ignorant one, because he has been ignorant himself; but the ignorant cannot recognise the wise, because he has never been wise.

HINDU SAYING.

The words of the good are like a staff in a slippery place.

FROM THE PERSIAN.

They asked their wisest man by what means he had attained to such a degree of knowledge? He replied: "Whatever I did not know, I was not ashamed to inquire about. Inquire about everything that you do not know; since, for the small trouble of asking, you will be guided in the road of knowledge."

RICHARD DE BURY. 1287—1345.

In Books we find the dead as it were living; in Books we foresee things to come; in Books warlike affairs are methodized; the rights of peace proceed from Books. All things are corrupted and decay with time. Saturn never ceases to devour those whom he generates; insomuch that the glory of the world would be lost in oblivion if God had not provided mortals with a remedy in Books. Alexander the ruler of the world; Julius the invader of the world and of the city, the first who in unity of person assumed the empire in arms and arts; the faithful Fabricius, the rigid Cato, would at this day have been without a memorial if the aid of Books had failed them. Towers are razed to the earth, cities overthrown, triumphal arches mouldered to dust; nor can the King or Pope be found, upon whom the privilege of a lasting name can be conferred more easily than by Books. A Book made, renders succession to the author: for as long as the Book exists, the author remaining ***αθανατος***, immortal, cannot perish. . . . The holy Boetius attributes a threefold existence to Truth,—in the mind, in the voice, and in writing; it appears to abide most usefully and fructify most productively of advantage in Books. For the Truth of the voice perishes with the sound. Truth latent in the mind, is hidden wisdom and invisible treasure; but the Truth which illuminates Books desires to manifest itself to every disciplinable sense, to the sight when read, to the hearing when heard: it, moreover, in a manner commends itself to the touch, when submitting to be transcribed, collated, corrected and preserved. Truth confined to the mind, though it may be the possession of a noble soul, while it wants a companion and is not judged of, either by the sight, or the hearing, appears to be inconsistent with pleasure. But the Truth of the voice is open to the hearing only, and latent to the sight (which shows us many differences of things fixed upon by a most subtle motion, beginning and ending as it were simultaneously). But the Truth written in a Book, being not fluctuating, but permanent, shows itself openly to the sight, passing through the spiritual ways of the eyes, as the porches and halls of common sense and imagination; it enters the chamber of intellect, reposes itself upon the couch of memory, and there congenerates the eternal Truth of the mind.

Lastly, let us consider how great a commodity of doctrine exists in Books, how easily, how secretly, how safely they expose the nakedness of human ignorance without putting it to shame. These are the masters who instruct us without rods and ferules, without hard words and anger, without clothes or money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if investigating you interrogate them, they conceal nothing; if you mistake them, they never grumble; if you are ignorant, they cannot laugh at you.

You only, O Books, are liberal and independent. You give to all who ask, and enfranchise all who serve you assiduously. . . . Truly you are the ears filled with most palatable grains. . . . You are golden urns in which manna is laid up, rocks flowing with honey, or rather indeed honeycombs; udders most copiously yielding the milk of life, storerooms ever full; the four-streamed river of Paradise, where the human mind is fed, and the arid intellect moistened and watered; . . . fruitful olives, vines of Engaddi, fig-trees knowing no sterility; burning lamps to be ever held in the hand.

The library, therefore, of wisdom is more precious than all riches, and nothing that can be wished for is worthy to be compared with it. Whosoever, therefore, acknowledges himself to be a zealous follower of truth, of happiness, of wisdom, of science, or even of the faith, must of necessity make himself a Lover of Books. —*Philobiblon, a Treatise on the Love of Books: written in Latin in* 1344, *and translated from the first edition,* 1473, *by J. B. Inglis.* *(London,* 1832.*)*

FRANCESCO PETRARCA. 1304—1374.

Books never pall on me. . . . They discourse with us, they take counsel with us, and are united to us by a certain living chatty familiarity. And not only does each book inspire the sense that it belongs to its readers, but it also suggests the name of others, and one begets the desire of the other.—*Epistolæ de Rebus Familiaribus (Jos. Francasetti's Edition).*

Epistle viii., Book xvii., is devoted to shewing "how contemptible is the lust of wealth when compared with the noble thirst for learning."

JOY [*loquitur*]: I consider Books aids to learning.

REASON: But take care lest they are rather hindrances; some have been prevented from conquering by the numbers of their soldiers, so many have found the multitude of their books a hindrance to learning, and abundance has bred want, as sometimes happens. But if the many Books are at hand, they are not to be cast aside, but to be gleaned, and the best used; and care should be taken that those which might have proved seasonable auxiliaries, do not become hindrances out of season.—*De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ, Edition of* 1613, *p.* 174. [*Translated by J. N.*]

The friends of Petrarch apologized to him for the length of time between their visits:

"It is impossible for us to follow your example: the life you lead is contrary to human nature. In winter, you sit like an owl, in the chimney corner. In summer, you are running incessantly about the fields."

Petrarch smiled at these observations:

"These people," said he, "consider the pleasures of the world as the supreme good, and cannot bear the idea of renouncing them. I have FRIENDS, whose society is extremely agreeable to me: they are of all ages, and of every country. They have distinguished themselves both in the cabinet and in the field, and obtained high honours for their knowledge of the sciences. It is easy to gain access to them;

for they are always at my service, and I admit them to my company, and dismiss them from it, whenever I please. They are never troublesome, but immediately answer every question I ask them. Some relate to me the events of past ages, while others reveal to me the secrets of nature. Some teach me how to live, and others how to die. Some, by their vivacity, drive away my cares and exhilarate my spirits, while others give fortitude to my mind, and teach me the important lesson how to restrain my desires, and to depend wholly on myself. They open to me, in short, the various avenues of all the arts and sciences, and upon their information I safely rely, in all emergencies. In return for all these services, they only ask me to accommodate them with a convenient chamber in some corner of my humble habitation, where they may repose in peace: for these friends are more delighted by the tranquillity of retirement, than with the tumults of society."

DOMINICO MANCINI (A CONTEMPORARY OF PETRARCH).

In vain that husbandman his seed doth sow,
If he his crop not in due season mow.
A general sets his army in array
In vain, unless he fight, and win the day.
'Tis virtuous action that must praise bring forth,
Without which slow advice is little worth.
Yet they who give good counsel, praise deserve,
Though in the active part they cannot serve:

In action, learnéd counsellors their age,
Profession, or disease, forbids t' engage.
Nor to philosophers is praise deny'd,
Whose wise instructions after-ages guide;
Yet vainly most their age in study spend;
No end of writing books, and to no end:
Beating their brains for strange and hidden things,
Whose knowledge, nor delight nor profit brings:
Themselves with doubt both day and night perplex,
Nor gentle reader please, or teach, but vex.
Books should to one of these four ends conduce,
For wisdom, piety, delight, or use.

. . . . . .

Then seek to know those things which make us blest,
And having found them, lock them in thy breast.

. . . . . .

In vain on study time away we throw,
When we forbear to act the things we know.

. . . . . .

God, who to thee reason and knowledge lent,
Will ask how these two talents have been spent.

Libellus de quattuor Virtutibus, Paris, 1484.
Translated by Sir John Denham. Chalmers' English Poets, vol. vii. *p.* 255.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER. 1328—1400.

A Clerke ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logik hadde long i-go

. . . . . .

For him was lever have at his beddes head
Twenty bookes, clothed in blak and reed,
Of Aristotil, and of his philosophie.

. . . . . .

But al though he were a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litul gold in cofre;
But al that he might of his frendes hente,
On bookes and his lernyng he it spente.

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And to hem yeve I feyth and ful credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that ther is game noon,
That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
But yt be seldome on the holy day,
Save, certeynly, whan that the monethe of May
Is comen, and that I here the foules synge,
And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,
Farwel my boke, and my devocion!

Prologue to the Legende of Goode Women.

For out of old fieldes, as men saithe,
Cometh all this new corne fro yere to yere,
And out of old bookes, in good faithe,
Cometh al this new science that men lere.

The Assembly of Foules.

THOMAS À KEMPIS. 1380—1471.

If thou wilt receive profit, read with humility, simplicity, and faith; and seek not at any time the fame of being learned.—*Book* I. *chap.* v.

Verily, when the day of judgment comes, we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done; nor how learnedly we have spoken, but how religiously we have lived.—*Book* I. *chap.* vi.

JOACHIMUS FORTIUS RINGELBERGIUS.

d. 1536.

Let no one be dejected, if he is not conscious of any great advantage in study at first. For as we know, that the hour-hand of a timepiece moves progressively onward, notwithstanding we cannot discern its momentary motion; and as we see trees and herbs increase and grow to maturity, although we are not able to perceive their hourly progress; so do we know that learning and study, although their transitions be imperceptible at the moment of observation, are sure in their advancement. The merchant thinks himself happy if after a ten years voyage, after a thousand dangers, he at length improves his fortune; and shall we, like poor-spirited creatures, give up all hopes after the first onset? No! let us rather adopt this as our maxim, that whatever the mind has commanded itself to do, it is sure of obtaining its purpose.

. . . . . .

To those who are accustomed to spend more time in slumber than the nature of their studies, and these our admonitions will admit of; an alarum clock, which might be set to any hour they chose, would be found highly serviceable. I myself, when I have been upon a journey, or sojourning in any place where a machine of this kind could not be obtained, have actually slept upon two flat pieces of wood, laid transversely upon my bed, lest I should slumber too long. Nor have I felt any inconvenience from this, for I have uniformly found by experience, that when weary, I have slept soundly, notwithstanding the hardness of my couch, and when sufficiently refreshed, the hardness of my couch has compelled me to quit it. But this to most men would be a harsh experiment, and one which perhaps few, however attached they may be to literary pursuits, would care to try. I therefore recommend the alarum in preference ; or what is infinitely better than either, a firm resolution not to continue to slumber after a certain hour of the morning.

. . . . . .

Let us detach ourselves from things trifling and insignificant, and give ourselves up to the study of things worthy our nature and capacity. We all value our possessions, much more ought we to estimate our time. Yet such is the irrationality of our conduct, that if we should happen by some mischance to lose a portion of our property, which by industry may be easily recovered, we fill the air with our lamentations ; but we not only bear the loss of time, which can never be recovered, with equanimity, but with manifest indications of joy and satisfaction.

. . . . . .

He who aspires to the character of a man of learning, has taken upon himself the performance of no common task. The ocean of literature is without limit. How then will he be able to perform a voyage, even to a moderate distance, if he waste his time in dalliance on the shore ? Our only hope is in exertion.

Let our only reward be that of industry. Unless we are vigilant to gather the fruit of time, whilst the autumn of life is yet with us; we shall, at the close of its winter, descend into the grave as the beasts which perish, without having left a record behind us to inform posterity that we ever existed.—"*De Ratione Studii;*" *translated by G. B. Earp, from the Edition of Erpenius* [1619], *who gave it the title of* "*Liber vere Aureus,*" *or* "*The truly Golden Treatise.*"

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS. 1467—1536.

At the first it is no great Matter how much you Learn; but how well you learn it. And now take a Direction how you may not only learn well, but easily too; for the right Method of Art qualifies the Artist to perform his Work not only well and expeditiously, but easily too. Divide the Day into Tasks, as we read *Pliny* the Second, and Pope *Pius* the Great did, Men worthy to be remember'd by all Men. In the first Part of it, which is the chief Thing of all, hear the Master interpret, not only attentively, but with a Sort of Greediness, not being content to follow him in his Dissertations with a slow Pace, but striving to out-strip him a little. Fix all his Sayings in your Memory, and commit the most material of them to Writing, the faithful Keeper of Words. And be sure to take Care not to rely upon them, as that ridiculous rich Man that *Seneca* speaks of did, who had form'd a Notion, that whatsoever of Literature any of his Servants had, was his own. By no Means have your Study furnish'd with learned Books, and be unlearned yourself. Don't suffer what you hear to slip out of your Memory, but recite it either with yourself, or to other Persons. Nor let this suffice you, but set apart some certain Time for Meditation; which one Thing as St. *Aurelius* writes does most notably conduce to assist both Wit and Memory. An Engagement and combating of Wits does in an extraordinary Manner both shew the Strength of Genius's, rouzes them, and augments them. If you are in Doubt of any Thing, don't be asham'd to ask; or if you have committed an Error, to be corrected. Avoid late and unseasonable Studies, for they murder Wit, and are very prejudicial to Health. The Muses love the Morning, and that is a fit Time for Study. After you have din'd, either divert yourself at some Exercise, or take a Walk, and discourse merrily, and Study between whiles. As for Diet, eat only as much as shall be sufficient to preserve Health, and not as much or more than the Appetite may crave. Before Supper, take a little Walk, and do the same after Supper. A little before you go to sleep read something that is exquisite, and worth remembring; and contemplate upon it till you fall asleep; and when you awake in the Morning, call yourself to an Account for it. Always keep this Sentence of *Pliny's* in your Mind, *All that time is lost that you don't bestow on Study.* Think upon this, that there is nothing more fleeting than Youth, which, when once it is past, can never be recall'd. But now I begin to be an Exhorter, when I promis'd to be a Director. My sweet *Christian*, follow this Method, or a better, if you can; and so farewell.—"*Colloquies: Of the Method of Study; To Christianus of Lubeck.*" [*From the Latin text of P. Scriver's Edition, printed by the Elzevirs*, 1643.]

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI. 1469—1527.

When evening has arrived, I return home, and go into my study. . . . I pass into the antique courts of ancient men, where, welcomed lovingly by them, I feed upon the food which is my own, and for which I was born. Here, I can speak with them without show, and can ask of them the motives of their actions; and they respond to me by virtue of their humanity. For hours together, the miseries of life no longer annoy me; I forget every vexation; I do not fear poverty; and death itself does not dismay me, for I have altogether transferred myself to those with whom I hold converse.—*Opere di Machiavelli, Editione Italia,* 1813, *vol.* viii. [*Translated by E. H.*]

MARTIN LUTHER. 1483—1546.

Every great book is an action, and every great action is a book.

All who would study with advantage in any art whatsoever, ought to betake themselves to the reading of some sure and certain books oftentimes over; for to read many books produceth confusion, rather than learning, like as those who dwell everywhere are not anywhere at home.—*Table Talk.*

ROGER ASCHAM. 1515—1568.

Before I went into Germany, I came to Broadgate in Leicestershire, to take my leave of that noble lady Jane Grey, to whom I was exceeding much beholding.

Her parents, the duke and duchess, with all the household, gentlemen and gentlewomen, were hunting in the park. I found her in her chamber, reading *Phædo Platonis* in Greek, and that with as much delight as some gentlemen would read a merry tale in Boccace. After salutation, and duty done, with some other talk, I asked her, why she would leese such pastime in the park? Smiling, she answered me; "I wist, all their sport in the park is but a shadow to that pleasure that I find in Plato. Alas! good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant." "And how came you, madam," quoth I, "to this deep knowledge of pleasure? and what did chiefly allure you into it, seeing not many women, but very few men, have attained thereunto?" "I will tell you," quoth she, "and tell you a truth, which perchance ye will marvel at. One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me, is, that he sent me so sharp and severe parents, and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother; whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry, or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else; I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly, as God made the world; or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea presently sometimes with pinches, nips, and bobs, and other ways (which I will not name for the honour I bear them) so without measure misordered, that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer; who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because whatsoever I do else but learning, is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking unto me. And thus my book hath been so much my pleasure, and bringeth daily to me more pleasure and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures, in very deed, be but trifles and troubles unto me."

I remember this talk gladly, both because it is so worthy of memory, and because also it was the last talk that ever I had, and the last time that ever I saw that noble and worthy lady.

. . . . . .

And I do not mean by all this my talk, that young gentlemen should always be poring on a book, and by using good studies should leese honest pleasure, and haunt no good pastime: I mean nothing less. For it is well known that I both like and love, and have always, and do yet still use all exercises and pastimes that be fit for my nature and ability: and beside natural disposition, in judgment also I was never either stoic in doctrine or anabaptist in religion, to mislike a merry, pleasant, and playful nature, if no outrage be committed against law, measure, and good order. Therefore I would wish, that beside some good time fitly appointed, and constantly kept, to increase by reading the knowledge of the tongues and learning; young gentlemen should use, and delight in all courtly exercises, and gentlemanlike pastimes. And good cause why: for the self same noble city of Athens, justly commended of me before, did wisely, and upon great consideration, appoint the Muses, Apollo and Pallas, to be patrons of learning to their youth. For the Muses, besides learning, were also ladies of dancing, mirth, and minstrelsy: Apollo was god of shooting, and author of cunning playing upon instruments; Pallas also was lady mistress in wars. Whereby was nothing else meant, but that learning should be always mingled with honest mirth and comely exercises; and that war also should be governed by learning and moderated by wisdom.

. . . . . .

Indeed books of common places be very necessary to induce a man into an orderly general knowledge, how to refer orderly all that he readeth, *ad certa rerum capita*, and not wander in study. But to dwell in *Epitomes*, and books of common places, and not to bind himself daily by orderly study, to read with all diligence principally the holiest Scripture, and withal the best doctors, and so to learn to make true difference betwixt the authority of the one and the counsel of the other, maketh so many seeming and sun-burnt ministers as we have; whose learning is gotten in a summer heat, and washed away with a Christmas snow again. And this exercise is not more needfully done in a great work, than wisely done in your common daily writing either of letter or other thing else; that is to say, to peruse diligently, and see and spy wisely, what is always more than needeth. For twenty to one offend more in writing too much than too little: even as twenty to one fall into sickness, rather by overmuch fulness, than by any lack or emptiness. And therefore is he always the best English physician, that best can give a purgation : that is by way of *Epitome* to cut all over-much away. And surely men's bodies be not more full of ill humours, than commonly men's minds (if they be young, lusty, proud, like and love themselves well, as most men do) be full of fancies, opinions, errors, and faults, not only in inward invention, but also in all their utterance, either by pen or talk.

And of all other men, even those that have the inventivest heads for all purposes, and roundest tongues in all matters and places (except they learn and use this good lesson of *Epitome*), commit commonly greater faults than dull, staying, silent men do. For quick inventors, and fair ready speakers, being boldened with their present ability to say more, and perchance better too, at the sudden for that present, than any other can do, use less help of diligence and study, than they ought to do; and so have in them commonly less learning, and weaker judgment for all deep considerations, than some duller heads and slower tongues have.

In every separate kind of learning, and study by itself, ye must follow choicely a few, and chiefly some one, and that namely in our school of eloquence, either for pen or talk. And as in portraiture and painting, wise men choose not that workman that can only make a fair hand, or a well-fashioned leg; but such a one as can furnish up fully all the features of the whole body of a man, woman, and child; and withal is able too, by good skill, to give to every one of these three, in their proper kind, the right form, the true figure, the natural colour, that is fit and due to the dignity of a man, to the beauty of a woman, to the sweetness of a young babe: even likewise do we seek such one in our school to follow; who is able always in all matters to teach plainly, to delight pleasantly, and to carry away by force of wise talk, all that shall hear or read him.

. . . . . .

But for ignorance men cannot like, and for idleness men will not labour, to come to any perfectness at all. For as the worthy poets in Athens and Rome were more careful to satisfy the judgment of one learned, than rash in pleasing the humour of a rude multitude; even so, if men in England now had the like reverend regard to learning, skill, and judgment, and durst not presume to write, except they came with the like learning, and also did use like diligence in searching out, not only just measure in every metre (as every ignorant person may easily do), but also true quantity in every foot and syllable (as only the learned shall be able to do, and as the Greeks and Romans were wont to do), surely then rash ignorant heads, which now can easily reckon up fourteen syllables, and easily stumble on every rhyme, either durst not, for lack of such learning, or else would not, in avoiding such labour, be so busy, as every where they be; and shops in London should not be so full of lewd and rude rhymes, as commonly they are. But now the ripest of tongue be readiest to write. And many daily in setting out books and ballads, make great show of blossoms and buds; in whom is neither root of learning nor fruit of wisdom at all.—*The Scholemaster, Book* i., *Ascham's Works, by Dr. Giles.* 1864. *Vol.* iii.

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE. 1537—1592.

The Commerce of Books is much more certain, and much more our own. It yields all other Advantages to the other two; but has the Constancy and Facility of it's Service for it's own Share: it goes side by side with me in my whole Course, and everywhere is assisting to me. It comforts me in my Age and Solitude; it eases me of a troublesome Weight of Idleness, and delivers me at all Hours from Company that I dislike; and it blunts the Point of Griefs, if they are not extreme, and have not got an entire Possession of my Soul. To divert myself from a troublesome Fancy, 'tis but to run to my Books; they presently fix me to them, and drive the other out of my Thoughts; and do not mutiny to see that I have only recourse to them for want of other more real, natural and lively Conveniences; they always receive me with the same Kindness. . . . The sick Man is not to be lamented, who has his Cure in his Sleeve. In the Experience and Practice of this Sentence, which is a very true one, all the Benefit I reap from Books consists; and yet I make as little use of it almost as those who know it not; I enjoy it as a Miser does his Money, in knowing that I may enjoy it when I please; my Mind is satisfied with this Right of Possession. I never travel without Books, either in Peace or War; and yet sometimes I pass over several Days, and sometimes Months, without looking into them; I will read by and by, say I to myself, or to Morrow, or when I please, and Time steals away without any Inconvenience. For it is not to be imagin'd to what

Degree I please my self, and rest content in this Consideration, that I have them by me, to divert my self with them when I am so dispos'd, and to call to mind what an Ease and Assistance they are to my Life. 'Tis the best Viaticum I have yet found out for this human Journey, and I very much lament those Men of Understanding who are unprovided of it. And yet I rather accept of any sort of diversion, how light soever, because this can never fail me. When at Home, I a little more frequent my Library, from whence I at once survey all the whole Concerns of my Family: As I enter it, I from thence see under my Garden, Court, and Base-court, and into all the parts of the Building. There I turn over now one Book, and then another, of various Subjects without Method or Design: One while I meditate, another I record, and dictate as I walk to and fro, such Whimsies as these with which I here present you. 'Tis in the third Story of a Tower, of which the Ground-Room is my Chapel, the second Story an Apartment with a withdrawing Room and Closet, where I often lie to be more retired. Above it is a great Wardrobe, which formerly was the most useless part of the House. In that Library I pass away most of the Days of my Life, and most of the Hours of the Day. In the Night I am never there. There is within it a Cabinet handsom and neat enough, with a very convenient Fire-place for the Winter, and Windows that afford a great deal of light, and very pleasant Prospects. And were I not more afraid of the Trouble than the Expence, the Trouble that frights me from all Business, I could very easily adjoin on either Side, and on the same Floor, a Gallery of an hundred Paces long, and twelve broad, having found Walls already rais'd for some other design, to the requisite height. Every Place of Retirement requires a Walk. My Thoughts sleep if I sit still; my Fancy does not go by it self, my legs must move it; and all those who study without a Book are in the same Condition. The Figure of my Study is round, and has no more flat Wall than what is taken up by my Table and Chairs; so that the remaining parts of the Circle present me a View of all my Books at once, set upon five Degrees of Shelves round about me. It has three noble and free Prospects, and is sixteen Paces Diameter. I am not so continually there in Winter; for my House is built upon an Eminence, as it's Name imports, and no part of it is so much expos'd to the Wind and Weather as that, which pleases me the better, for being of a painful Access, and a little remote, as well upon the account of Exercise, as being also there more retir'd from the Crowd. 'Tis there that I am in my Kingdom, as we say, and there I endeavour to make my self an absolute Monarch, and to sequester this one Corner from all Society, whether Conjugal, Filial, or Civil. Elsewhere I have but verbal Authority only, and of a confus'd Essence. That Man, in my Opinion, is very miserable, who has not at home, where to be by himself, where to entertain himself alone, or to conceal himself from others. . . . I think it much more supportable to be always alone than never to be so. If any one shall tell me, that it is to under-value the Muses, to make use of them only for Sport, and to pass away the Time; I shall tell him, that he does not know the value of Sport and Pastime so well as I do; I can hardly forbear to add further, that all other end is ridiculous. I live from Hand to Mouth, and, with Reverence be it spoken, I only live for my self; to that all my Designs do tend, and in that terminate. I studied when young for Ostentation; since to make my self a little wiser; and now for my Diversion, but never for any Profit. A vain and prodigal Humour I had after this sort of Furniture, not only for supplying my own needs and defects, but moreover for Ornament and outward show; I have since quite abandon'd it. Books have many charming Qualities to such as know how to choose them. But every Good has it's Ill; 'tis a Pleasure that is not pure and clean, no more than others: It has it's Inconveniences, and great ones too. The Mind indeed is exercised by it, but the Body, the care of which I must withal never neglect, remains in the mean time without Action, grows heavy and melancholy. I know no Excess more prejudicial to me, nor more to be avoided in this my declining Age.—*Of Three Commerces. (Charles Cotton's Translation*, 1685.)

JOHN FLORIO. 1545—1625.

Concerning the Honour of Books.

Since honour from the honourer proceeds,
How well do they deserve, that memorize
And leave in books for all posterities
The names of worthies and their virtuous deeds;
When all their glory else, like water-weeds
Without their element, presently dies,
And all their greatness quite forgotten lies,
And when and how they flourished no man heeds!

How poor remembrances are statues, tombs
And other monuments that men erect
To princes, which remain in closéd rooms,
Where but a few behold them, in respect
Of Books, that to the universal eye
Show how they lived ; the other where they lie !

Prefixed to the second edition of John Florio's Translation of Montaigne's Essays, 1613.—[*Vide Notes to D. M. Main's Treasury of English Sonnets, p.* 248, *in reference to this Sonnet.*]

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. 1549.

Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.—*Collect for Second Sunday in Advent.*

JOHN LYLYE [or LILLY]. 1553—1601.

. . . far more seemely were it for thee to have thy Studie full of Bookes, than thy Purses full of Mony.—*Euphues ; the Anatomy of Wit.*

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. 1554—1586.

It is manifest that all government of action is to be gotten by knowledge, and knowledge, best, by gathering many knowledges, which is reading.

LORD BACON. 1561—1629.

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring ; for ornament is in discourse ; and for ability is in the judgment and disposition of business. . . . Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. . . . Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory: if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not.

The images of men's wits and knowledge remain in books, exempted from the worry of time and capable of perpetual renovation. Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages.

We enter into a desire of knowledge sometimes from a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain our minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; sometimes to enable us to victory of wit and contradiction, and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of our gift of reason, for the benefit and use of man:—as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down, with a fair prospect; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention; or a shop for profit or sale; and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate.

As the eye rejoices to receive the light, the ear to hear sweet music; so the mind, which is the man, rejoices to discover the secret works, the varieties and beauties of nature. The inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing it; the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it; and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying it, is the sovereign good of our nature. The unlearned man knows not what it is to descend into himself or to call himself to account, or the pleasure of that "suavissima vita indies sentire se fieri meliorem." The mind of man doth wonderfully endeavour and extremely covet that it may not be pensile; but that it may light upon something fixed and immoveable, on which, as on a firmament, it may support itself in its swift motions and disquisitions. Aristotle endeavours to prove that in all motions of bodies there is some point quiescent; and very elegantly expounds the fable of Atlas, who stood fixed and bore up the heavens from falling, to be meant of the poles of the world whereupon the conversion is accomplished. In like manner, men do earnestly seek to have some Atlas or axis of their cogitations within themselves, which may, in some measure, moderate the fluctuations and wheelings of the understanding, fearing it may be the falling of their heaven.

In studies whatsoever a man commandeth upon himself let him set hours for it; but whatsoever is agreeable to his nature, let him take no care for any set hours, for his thoughts will fly to it of themselves.

Such letters as are written from wise men are of all the words of men, in my judgment, the best; for they are more natural than orations, public speeches, and more advanced than conference or present speeches.

SAMUEL DANIEL. 1562—1619.

O blessed Letters! that combine in one
All Ages past, and make one live with all.
By you we do confer with who are gone,
And the Dead-living unto Council call;
By you th' unborn shall have Communion
Of what we feel and what doth us befal.
Soul of the World, Knowledge without thee;
What hath the Earth that truly glorious is?
. . . What Good is like to this,
To do worthy the writing, and to write
Worthy the Reading, and the World's Delight?

Musophilus; containing a General Defence of Learning.

And tho' books, madam, cannot make this Mind,
Which we must bring apt to be set aright;
Yet do they rectify it in that Kind,
And touch it so, as that it turns that Way
Where Judgment lies. And tho' we cannot find
The certain Place of Truth; yet do they stay,
And entertain us near about the same:

And give the Soul the best Delight that may
Enchear it most, and most our Sp'rits enflame
To Thoughts of Glory, and to worthy Ends.
To the Lady Lucy, Countess of Bedford.

William Shakespeare. 1564—1616.

Me, poor man, my library
Was dukedom large enough.
Tempest, i. 2.

Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me,
From my own library, with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom.
Tempest, i. 2.

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book.
Love's Labour Lost, iv. 2.

The books, the arts, the acadèmes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world.
Love's Labour Lost, iv. 3.

✓ Come, and take a choice of all my library;
And so beguile thy sorrow.
Titus Andronicus, iv. 1.

Alonzo of Arragon.

Alonzo of Arragon was wont to say in commendation of Age, that Age appeared to be best in four things: old wood best to burn; old wine to drink; old friends to trust; and old authors to read.—*Bacon's Apophthegms, No.* 101.

ANTONIO DE GUEVARA. *d.* 1544.

He that lives in his own fields and habitation, which God hath given him, enjoys true peace. . . . The very occasion of ill-doing is by his presence taken away. He busieth not himself in a search of pleasures, but in regulating and disposing of his family; in the education of his children and domestick discipline. No violent tempestuous motions distract his rest, but soft gales and a silent aire, refresh and breath upon him. He doth all things commodiously, ordereth his life discreetly, not after the opinion of the people, but by the rules of his own certain experience. He knows he must not live here for ever, and therefore thinks frequently of dissolution and the day of death. . . . He that lives in the country, hath Time for his servant, and whatsoever occasions offer themselves—if he be but a discreet observer of his hours—he can have no cause to complaine that they are unseasonable. Nothing will hinder him from the pleasure of books, from devotion, or the fruition of his friends.

. . . . . .

More happy then, yea by much more happy than any king, if not nearer to a divine felicitie, is that person who lives and dwels in the country upon the rents and profits of his own grounds. There without danger he may act and speake as it becomes simplicity and naked truth. He hath liberty and choice in all his imployments. . . . In the country we can have a harmelesse and cheerfull conversation with our familiar friends, either in our houses or under some shade; whereas in publick company there are many things spoken at randome, which bring more of wearinesse than of pleasure to the hearers. But the quiet retyr'd liver, in that calme silence, reads over some profitable histories or books of devotion, and very often —stird up by an inward and holy joy—breaks out into divine praises and the singing of hymnes and psalms; with these sacred recreations—more delightfull than romances, and the lascivious musick of fidlers, which only cloy and weary the ears—doth he feed his soule and refresh his body.

. . . . . .

The day it self—in my opinion—seems of more length and beauty in the country, and can be better enjoyed than any where else. There the years passe away calmly, and one day gently drives on the other, insomuch that a man may be sensible of a certaine satietie and pleasure from every houre, and may be said to feed upon Time it self, which devours all other things. O who can never fully expresse the pleasures and happinesse of the country-life! . . . what oblectation and refreshment it is, to behold the green shades, the beauty and majesty of the tall and ancient groves, to be skill'd in planting and dressing of orchards, flowres, and pot-herbs, to temper and allay these harmlesse imployments with an innocent merry song, to ascend sometimes to the fresh and healthfull hils, to descend into the bosome of the valleys, and the fragrant, deawy meadows, to heare the musick of birds, the murmurs of bees, the falling of springs, and the pleasant discourses of the old plough-men, where without any impediment or trouble a man may walk, and—as Cato Censorius us'd to say—discourse with the dead, that is, read the pious works of learned men, who, departing this life, left behind them their noble thoughts for the benefit of posterity and the preservation of their own worthy names.—*The Praise and Happinesse of the Countrie-Life; written originally in Spanish by Don Antonio de Guevara, Bishop of Carthagena, and Counsellour of Estate to Charls the Fifth Emperour of Germany. Put into English by H. Vaughan, Silurist.* 1651.

JOSEPH SCALIGER. 1540—1609.

I wish I were a skilful grammarian. No one can understand any author, without a thorough knowledge of grammar. Those who pretend to undervalue learned grammarians, are arrant blockheads without any exception. From whence proceed so many dissensions in religious matters, but from ignorance of grammar?—*Scaligerana.*

JOSHUA SYLVESTER. 1563—1618.

Cease not to learne untill thou cease to live:
Think that Day lost, wherein thou draw'st no Letter,
Nor gain'st no Lesson, that new grace may give,
To make thyself Learneder, Wiser, Better.

. . . . . .

Who readeth much, and never meditates,
Is like the greedy eater of much food,
Who so surcloyles his Stomach with his Cates,
That commonly they do him little good.

Tetrastica; or the Quatrains of Guy de Faur, Lord of Pibrac.

A SIXTEENTH CENTURY WRITER.

"Bookes lookt on as to their Readers or Authours, do at the very first mention, challenge Preheminence above the Worlds admired fine things. Books are the Glasse of Counsell to dress ourselves by. They are lifes best business: Vocation to these hath more Emolument coming in, than all the other busie Termes of life. They are Feelesse Counsellours, no delaying Patrons, of easie Accesse, and kind Expedition, never sending away empty any Client or Petitioner. They are for Company, the best Friends; in doubts, Counsellours; in Damp, Comforters; Time's Perspective; the home Traveller's Ship, or Horse, the busie man's best Recreation, the Opiate of Idle weariness; the mind's best Ordinary; Nature's Garden and Seed-plot of Immortality. Time spent (needlessly) from them, is consumed, but with them, twice gain'd. Time captivated and snatched from thee, by Incursions of business, Thefts of Visitants, or by thy own Carelessnesse lost, is by these, redeemed in life; they are the soul's Viaticum; and against death its Cordiall. In a true verdict, no such Treasure as a Library."—*From the Introduction to Allibone's Critical Dictionary of English Literature. Name of Author not given.*

JOSEPH HALL. 1574—1656.

I can wonder at nothing more than how a man can be idle; but of all others, a scholar; in so many improvements of reason, in such sweetness of knowledge, in such variety of studies, in such importunity of thoughts : other artizans do but practice, we still learn; others run still in the same gyre to weariness, to satiety; our choice is infinite; other labours require recreations; our very labour recreates our sports; we can never want either somewhat to do, or somewhat that we would do. How numberless are the volumes which men have written of arts, of tongues! How endless is that volume which God hath written of the world! wherein every creature is a letter; every day a new page. Who can be weary of either of these? To find wit in poetry; in philosophy, profoundness; in mathematics, acuteness; in history, wonder of events; in oratory, sweet eloquence; in divinity, supernatural light, and holy devotion; as so many rich metals in their proper mines; whom would it not ravish with delight? After all these, let us but open our eyes, we cannot look beside a lesson, in this universal book of our Maker, worth our study, worth taking out. What creature hath not his miracle? what event doth not challenge his observation?

And, if, weary of foreign employment, we list to look home into ourselves, there we find a more private world of thoughts which set us on work anew, more busily and not less profitably: now our silence is vocal, our solitariness popular; and we are shut up, to do good unto many; if once we be cloyed with our own company, the door of conference is open; here interchange of discourse (besides pleasure) benefits us; and he is a weak companion from whom we return not wiser. I could envy, if I could believe that anchoret, who, secluded from the world, and pent up in his voluntary prison walls, denied that he thought the day long, whiles yet he wanted learning to vary his thoughts. Not to be cloyed with the same conceit is difficult, above human strength; but to a man so furnished with all sorts of knowledge, that according to his dispositions he can change his studies, I should wonder that ever the sun should seem to pass slowly. How many busy tongues chase away good hours in pleasant chat, and complain of the haste of night! What ingenious mind can be sooner weary of talking with learned authors, the most harmless and sweetest companions? What a heaven lives a scholar in, that at once in one close room can daily converse with all the glorious martyrs and fathers? that can single out at pleasure, either sententious Tertullian, or grave Cyprian, or resolute Hierome, or flowing Chrysostome, or divine Ambrose, or devout Bernard, or, (who alone is all these) heavenly Augustine, and talk with them and hear their wise and holy counsels, verdicts, resolutions; yea, (to rise higher) with courtly Esay, with learned Paul, with all their fellow-prophets, apostles; yet more, like another Moses, with God himself, in them both?

Let the world contemn us; while we have these delights we cannot envy them; we cannot wish ourselves other than we are. Besides, the way to all other contentments is troublesome; the only recompense is in the end. To delve in the mines, to scorch in the fire for the getting, for the fining of gold is a slavish toil; the comfort is in the wedge to the owner, not the labourers; where our very search of knowledge is delightsome. Study itself is our life; from which we would not be barred for a world.

How much sweeter then is the fruit of study, the conscience of knowledge? In comparison whereof the soul that hath once tasted it, easily contemns all human comforts. Go now, ye worldlings, and insult over our paleness, our neediness, our neglect. Ye could not be so jocund if you were not ignorant; if you did not want knowledge, you could not overlook him that hath it; for me, I am so far from emulating you, that I profess I had as lieve be a brute beast, as an ignorant rich man. How is it then, that those gallants, which have privilege of blood and birth, and better education, do so scornfully turn off these most manly, reasonable, noble exercises of scholarship? a hawk becomes their fist better than a book; no dog but is a better company: any thing or nothing, rather than what we ought. O minds brutishly sensual! Do they think that God made them for disport, who even in his paradise, would not allow pleasure without work? And if for business, either of body or mind: those of the body are commonly servile, like itself. The mind therefore, the mind only, that honourable and divine part, is fittest to be employed of those which would reach to the highest perfection of men, and would be more than the most. And what work is there of the mind but the trade of a scholar, study? Let me therefore fasten this problem on our school gates, and challenge all comers, in the defence of it; that no scholar, cannot but be truly noble. And if I make it not good let me never be admitted further then to the subject of our question. Thus we do well to congratulate to ourselves our own happiness; if others will come to us, it shall be our comfort, but more theirs;

if not, it is enough that we can joy in ourselves, and in him in whom we are that we are.—*Epistle to Mr. Milward.*

Every day is a little life: and our whole is but a day repeated. . . . Those therefore that dare lose a day, are dangerously prodigal; those that dare misspend it, desperate. We can best teach others by ourselves; let me tell your lordship, how I would pass my days, whether common or sacred. . . . All days are his, who gave time a beginning and continuance; yet some he hath made ours, not to command, but to use. In none may we forget him; in some we must forget all, besides him. First, therefore, I desire to awake at those hours, not when I will, but when I must; pleasure is not a fit rule for rest, but health; neither do I consult so much with the sun, as mine own necessity, whether of body or in that of the mind. If this vassal could well serve me waking, it should never sleep; but now it must be pleased, that it must be serviceable. Now when sleep is rather driven away than leaves me, I would ever awake with God; my first thoughts are for him, who hath made the night for rest, and the day for travel; and as he gives, so blesses both. If my heart be early seasoned with his presence, it will savour of him all day after. While my body is dressing, not with an effeminate curiosity, nor yet with rude neglect; my mind addresses itself to her ensuing task, bethinking what is to be done, and in what order; and marshalling (as it may) my hours with my work; that done, after some whiles meditation, I walk up to my masters and companions, my books; and sitting down amongst them, with the best contentment, I dare not reach forth my hand to salute any of them, till I have first looked up to heaven, and craved favour of him to whom all my studies are duly referred: without whom, I can neither profit, nor labour. After this, out of no over great variety, I call forth those which may best fit my occasions; wherein I am not too scrupulous of age; sometimes I put myself to school, to one of those ancients, whom the church hath honoured with the name of Fathers; whose volumes I confess not to open, without a sacred reverence of their holiness and gravity; sometimes to those later doctors, which want nothing but age to make them classical; always to God's book.

That day is lost, whereof some hours are not improved in those divine monuments: others I turn over out of choice: these out of duty. Ere I can have sate unto weariness, my family, having now overcome all household distractions, invites me to our common devotions; not without some short preparation. These heartily performed, send me up with a more strong and cheerful appetite to my former work, which I find made easy to me by intermission, and variety; now therefore can I deceive the hours with change of pleasures, that is, of labours. One while mine eyes are busied, another while my hand, and sometimes my mind takes the burthen from them both; wherein I would imitate the skilfullest cooks, which make the best dishes with manifold mixtures; one hour is spent in textual divinity, another in controversy; histories relieve them both. Now, when the mind is weary of other labours, it begins to undertake her own; sometimes it meditates and winds up for future use; sometimes it lays forth her conceits into present discourse; sometimes for itself, ofter for others. Neither know I whether it works or plays in these thoughts; I am sure no sport hath more pleasure, no work more use: only the decay of a weak body makes me think these delights insensibly laborious.—"*How a day should be spent.*" *In an Epistle to My Lord Denny.*

BEN JONSON. 1574—1637.

To Sir Henry Goodyere.

When I would know thee, Goodyere, my thought looks
Upon thy well-made choice of friends and books;
Then do I love thee, and behold thy ends
In making thy friends books, and thy books friends.

GILBERT DE PORRÉ (A FRENCH ARCHBISHOP OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY).

Our residence is empty, save only myself, and the rats and the mice, that nibble in solitary hunger. There is no voice in the hall, no tramp on the stairs, no racket in the chambers, nor trembling and noise below. The kitchen clock has stopped. The pump creaks no more, and nothing sounds as it did, except the splash of the river under the windows, the dull and ceaseless roar of the distant city, and the front-door bell. Travelling people amuse themselves with that yet. But the camp is moved. The whole tribe are in the country, ankle-wet in dewy grass every morning; chopping, hoeing, planting, fishing, or exploring nooks and strange new places by the sea-side.

But I sit here with no company but books and some bright-faced friends upon the wall, musing upon things past and things to come; reading a little, falling off into a reverie, waking to look out on the ever-charming beauty of the landscape, dipping again into some dainty honeycomb of literature, wandering from author to author, to catch the echoes which fly from book to book, and by silent suggestions or similarities connect the widely-separated men in time and nature closely together. All minds in the world's past history find their focal point in a library. This is that pinnacle from which we might see all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. I keep Egypt and the Holy Land in the closet next the window. On this side of them is Athens and the empire of Rome. Never was such an army mustered as a library army. No general ever had such soldiers as I have. Let the military world call its roll, and I will call mine. The privates in my army would have made even the staff-officers of Alexander's army seem insignificant. Only think of a platoon of such good literary and philosophical yeomen as will answer my roll-call. "Plato!" "Here." A sturdy and noble soldier. "Aristotle!" "Here." A host in himself. Then I call Demosthenes, Cicero, Cæsar, Tacitus, Pliny, and of the famous Alexandrian school, Porphyry, Jamblicus, Plotinus, and others, all worthy fellows every one of them, fully armed and equipped, and looking as fresh as if they had received the gift of youth and immortality. Modest men all; they never speak unless spoken to. Bountiful men all; they never refuse the asker. I have my doubts whether, if they were alive, I could keep the peace of my domains. But now they dwell together in unity, and all of the train in one company, and work for the world's good, each in his special way, but all contribute. I have also in a corner the numerous band of Christian Fathers,—Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, St. Ambrose, and others, with their opponents. They now lie peacefully together, without the shade of repugnance or anger. It is surprising how these men have changed. Not only are they here without quarrelling or disputing, without ambition or selfishness, but how calmly do they sit, though you pluck their opinions by the beard! Orthodox and heretic are now upon the most friendly terms. No kingdom ever had such illustrious subjects as mine, or was half as well governed. I can lead them forth to such wars as I choose, and not one of them is deaf to the trumpet. I hold all Egypt in fee simple. I can say as much of all the Orient, as he that was sent to grass did of Babylon. I build not a city, but empires, at a word. Praxiteles and Phidias look out of my window, while I am gone back to the Acropolis to see what they are about. The architects are building night and day, like them of old, without the sound of a hammer; my artists are painting, my designers are planning, my poets are chanting, my philosophers are discoursing, my historians are spinning their dry web, my theologians are weaving their yet finer ones. All the world is around me. All that ever stirred human hearts, or fired the imagination, is harmlessly here. My library shelves are the avenues of time. Cities and empires are put into a corner. Ages have wrought, generations grown, and all the blossoms are cast down here. It is the garden of immortal fruits, without dog or dragon.—[*From Letters of Gilbert de Porré, discovered and printed about thirty years ago.*]

JOHN FLETCHER. 1576—1625.

Give me
Leave to enjoy myself. That place, that does
Contain my books, the best companions, is
To me a glorious court, where hourly I
Converse with the old sages and philosophers.
And sometimes for variety, I confer
With kings and emperors, and weigh their counsels;
Calling their victories, if unjustly got,
Unto a strict account: and in my fancy,
Deface their ill-planed statues. Can I then
Part with such constant pleasures, to embrace
Uncertain vanities? No: be it your care
To augment a heap of wealth; it shall be mine
To increase in knowledge. Lights there for my study!

The Elder Brother, Act i. *Scene* 2.

ROBERT BURTON. 1576—1640.

But amongst those exercises or recreations of the mind within doors, there is none so general, so aptly to be applied to all sorts of men, so fit and proper to expel idleness and melancholy, as that of study. [Here Cicero is quoted, the passage from whom is given *ante* p. 3.] What so full of content, as to read, walk, and see maps, pictures, statues, &c. . . . Who is he that is now wholly overcome with idleness, or otherwise encircled in a labyrinth of worldly care, troubles, and discontents, that will not be much lightened in his mind by reading of some enticing story, true or feigned, where as in a glass he shall observe what our forefathers have done, the beginnings, ruins, falls, periods of commonwealths, private men's actions displayed to the life, &c. Plutarch therefore calls them, *secundas mensas et bellaria*, the second course and junkets, because they were generally read at noblemen's feasts. Who is not earnestly affected with a passionate speech, well penned, an eloquent poem, or some pleasant bewitching discourse, like that of Heliodorus (Melancthon de Heliodoro), *ubi oblectatio quædam placide fluit cum hilaritate conjuncta?* . . . To most kind of men it is an extraordinary delight to study. For what a world of books offers itself, in all subjects, arts, and science, to the rival contest and capacity of the reader! . . . What is there so sure, what so pleasant? . . . What vast tomes are extant in law, physic, and divinity, for profit, pleasure, practice, speculation, in verse or prose! Their names alone are the subject of whole volumes; we know thousands of authors of all sorts, many great libraries full well furnished, like so many dishes of meat, served out for several palates; and he is a very block that is affected with none of them. . . . Such is the excellency of these studies that all those ornaments, and childish bubbles of wealth, are not worthy to be compared to them; I would even live and die with such meditations, and take more delight, true content of mind in them, than thou hast in all thy wealth and sport, how rich soever thou art. And as Cardan well seconds me—"it is more honourable and glorious to understand these truths, than to govern provinces, to be beautiful, or to be young." The like pleasure there is in all other studies, to such as are truly addicted to them; the like sweetness, which, as Circe's cup bewitcheth a student, he cannot leave off. . . . Julius Scaliger . . . brake out into a pathetical protestation, he had rather be the author of twelve verses in Lucan, or such an Ode in Horace, than Emperor of Germany. . . . King James (1605), when he came to see our University of Oxford, and amongst other edifices now went to view that famous Library renewed by Sir Thomas Bodley, in imitation of Alexander, at his departure brake out into that noble speech: "If I were not a king, I would be a University man; and if it were so that I must be a prisoner, if I might have my wish, I would desire to have no other prison than that library, and to be chained together with so many good authors." So sweet is the delight of study, the more learning they have (as he that hath a dropsy, the more he drinks, the thirstier he is) the more they covet to learn; harsh at first learning is, *radices amaræ*, but *fructus dulces*, according to Isocrates, pleasant at last; the longer they live, the more they are enamoured with the Muses. Heinsius, the keeper of the library at Leyden, in Holland, was mewed up in it all the year long; and that which to thy thinking should have bred loathing, caused in him a greater liking. "I no sooner (saith he) come into the library, but I bolt the doors to me, excluding lust, ambition, avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is idleness, the mother of ignorance, and melancholy herself; and in the very lap of eternity amongst so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones and rich men that know not this happiness." . . . Whosoever he is therefore that is overrun with solitariness, or carried away with pleasing melancholy and vain conceits, and for want of employment knows not how to spend his time; or crucified with worldly care, I can prescribe him no better remedy than this of study . . . provided always that this malady proceed not from overmuch study; for in such case he adds fuel to the fire, and nothing can be more pernicious; let him take heed he do not overstretch his wits, and make a skeleton of himself. . . . Study is only prescribed to those that are otherwise idle, troubled in mind, or carried headlong with vain thoughts and imaginations to distract their cogitations (although variety of study, or some serious subject, would do the former no harm), and direct their continual meditations another way. Nothing in this case better than study. . . . Read the Scriptures, which Hyperius holds available of itself; "the mind is erected thereby from all worldly cares, and hath much quiet and tranquillity." For as Austin well hath it, 'tis *scientia scientiarum*, *omni melle dulcior*, *omni pane suavior*, *omni vino hilarior:* 'tis the best nepenthe, surest cordial, sweetest alterative, presentest diverter; for neither, as Chrysostom well adds, "those boughs and leaves of trees which are plashed for cattle to stand under, in the heat of the day, in summer, so much refresh them with their acceptable shade, as the reading of the Scripture doth recreate and comfort a distressed soul, in sorrow and affliction." . . . *quod* *cibus corpori, lectio animæ facit,* saith Seneca, "as meat is to the body, such is reading to the soul." . . . Cardan calls a library the physic of the soul; "divine authors fortify the mind, make men bold and constant; and (as Hyperius adds) godly conference will not permit the mind to be tortured with absurd cogitations." Rhasis enjoins continual conference to such melancholy men, perpetual discourse of some history, tale, poem, news, &c., which feeds the mind as meat and drink doth the body, and pleaseth as much. . . . Saith Lipsius, "when I read Seneca, methinks I am beyond all human fortune, on the top of a hill above mortality." . . . I would for these causes wish him that is melancholy to use both human and divine authors, voluntarily to impose some task upon himself to divert his melancholy thoughts. . . . Or let him demonstrate a proposition in Euclid, in his last five books, extract a square root, or study algebra; than which, as Clavius holds, "in all human disciplines nothing can be more excellent or pleasant, so abstruse, and recondite, so bewitching, so miraculous, so ravishing, so easy withal and full of delight."—*The Anatomy of Melancholy, Part* ii., *Sec.* 2, *Memb.* 4.

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY. 1581—1613.

Books are a part of man's prerogative,
In formal ink they Thoughts and Voices hold,
That we to them our Solitude may give,
And make Time Present travel that of Old.
Our Life Fame pieceth longer at the End,
And Books it farther backward do extend.

The Wife.

JOHN HALES. 1584—1656.

From the *order of Reading*, and the *matters in Reading* to be observed, we come to the *method of observation*. What order we are for our best use to keep in *entring our Notes into our Paper-Books*.

The custom which hath most prevailed hitherto, was *common placing* a thing at the first *Original* very *plain* and *simple;* but by after-times much increased, some augmenting the number of the *Heads*, others inventing quainter forms of disposing them: till at length *Common-place-books* became like unto the *Roman Breviarie* or *Missal.* It was a great part of *Clerkship* to know how to use them. The *Vastness of the Volumes*, the *multitude of Heads*, the *intricacy of disposition*, the pains of *committing the Heads to memory*, and last, of the labour of so often *turning the Books* to enter the observations in their due places, are things so *expensive of time* and *industry*, that although at length the work comes to perfection, yet it is but like the *Silver Mines in Wales*, the profit will hardly quit the pains. I have often doubted with my self, whether or no there were any necessity of being so exactly *Methodical.* First, because there hath not yet been found a *Method of that Latitude*, but little reading would furnish you with some things, which would fall without the compass of it. Secondly, because men of confused, dark and clowdy understandings, no beam or light of order and method can ever rectifie; whereas men of clear understanding, though but in a *mediocrity*, if they read good Books carefully, and note diligently, it is impossible but they should find incredible profit, though their Notes lie never so confusedly. The strength of our *natural memory*, especially if we help it, by revising our own Notes; the *nature of things themselves*, many times ordering themselves, and *tantum non*, telling us how to range them; a *mediocrity of care* to see that matters lie not too *Chaos-like*, will with very small damage save us this great labour of being *over-superstitiously methodical.* And what though peradventure something be lost, *Exilis domus est, &c.* It is a sign of great poverty of *Scholarship*, where every thing that *is lost, is miss'd;* whereas *rich* and *well accomplish'd learning* is able to lose many things with little or no inconvenience.—*Golden Remains*, 1673.

BISHOP HACKET. 1592—1670.

He converted a waste room into a goodly Library (Westminster Abbey Library), modelled it into decent shape, furnished it with desk and chains, accoutred it with all utensils, and stored it with a vast number of learned volumes, when he received thanks from all the professors of learning in and about London far beyond his expectation, because they had free admittance to such honey from the flowers of such a garden, as they wanted before, it compelled him to unlock his cabinet of Jewels, and bring forth his choicest manuscripts. A right noble gift in all the books he gave to this Serapæum, but especially the parchments. Some good Authors were conferred by other benefactors, but the richest fruit was shaken from the Boughs of this one tree, which will keep green in an unfading memory in despite of the tempest of iniquity.—*Life of Archbishop Williams*, 1693.

OLD ENGLISH SONG.

O for a Booke and a shadie nooke,
eyther in-a-doore or out;
With the grene leaves whisp'ring overhede,
or the Streete cryes all about.
Where I maie Reade all at my ease,
both of the Newe and Olde;
For a jollie goode Booke whereon to looke,
is better to me than Golde.

BALTHASAR BONIFACIUS RHODIGINUS.

1584—1659.

But how can I live here without my books? I really seem to myself crippled and only half myself; for if, as the great Orator used to say, arms are a soldier's members, surely books are the limbs of scholars. Corasius says: Of a truth, he who would deprive me of books, my old friends, would take away all the delight of my life, nay, I will even say all desire of living.—*Historia Ludicra, Lib.* ix. *cap.* ii. *p.* 148. *Edition of Brussels*, 1656, *4to.* [*Translated by J. N.*]

LORD CHANDOS. *d.* 1621.

As in the choise, and reading of good bookes, principally consists the enabling and aduancement of a mans knowledge, and learning; yet if it be not mixed with the conuersation, of discreet, able, and vnderstanding men, they can make little vse of their reading, either for themselues, or the Commonwealth where they liue. There is not a more common Prouerb, then this, ***That the greatest Clerkes bee not alwayes the wisest men***, and reason for it, being a very vneuen rule, to square all actions, and consultations, onely by booke precedents. Time hath so many changes, & alterations, and such varietie of occasions, and opportunities, interuening, and mingled, that it is impossible to goe new wayes, in the old paths; so that though reading doe furnish, and direct a mans iudgement, yet it doth not wholly gouerne it. Therefore the necessitie of knowing the present time, and men, wherein we liue, is so great, that it is the principall guide of our actions, and reading but supplementall.—*Horæ Subsecivæ: Observations and Discovrses: Of a Country Life.* 1620.

[The authorship of this work is assigned to Grey Bridges, Lord Chandos,—*vide* Brydges' *Censura Literaria*, and Park's Edition of Lord Oxford's *Royal and Noble Authors.*]

LEO ALLATIUS. 1586—1669.

For it is wonderful how constantly the mind craves novelty, and succumbs to no fatigue, to no want of sleep. I know that there is another happiness provided for men, for which each of us ought to strive with his whole energy; but, if I did not know that, I should think it was only to be found in the perusal of the most excellent writers; and I should consider the office of preserving them the highest felicity. It is the most delightful, and the most worthy thing that all our industry and indulgence should be expended on them. To me, indeed, the light of the sun, the day, and life itself, would be joyless and bitter, if I had not something to read: if I lacked the works of the most illustrious men; for, in comparison with their preciousness and delight, wealth and pleasure, and all the things that men prize, are mean and trifling. This thirst, then, or madness (I may so call the insatiable passion of the mind for literature), while it continually inspires me with the desire to investigate new authors, constantly offers the mind something new; and, when I have acquired it, I am grieved that I have been so long deprived of it. Hence I am evermore driven on by more urgent stimuli.—*Jo. Alberti Fabricii Bibliothecæ Graecæ, Liber* v., *Mich. Pselli, Junioris, Scripta Inedita, p.* 40. *Hamburg*, 1727. [*Translated by J. N.*]

GEORGE WITHER. 1588—1667.

She [The Muse] doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow:
Makes the desolatest place
To her presence be a grace:
And the blackest discontents
To be pleasing ornaments.
In my former days of bliss,
Her divine skill taught me this,
That from everything I saw,
I could some invention draw:
And raise pleasure to her height,
Through the meanest object's sight,
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustlëing;

By a daisy, whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree,
She could more infuse in me,
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.

. . . . .

She hath taught me by her might
To draw comfort and delight.
Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,
I will cherish thee for this.
Poesy! thou sweet'st content
That e'er heaven to mortals lent:

. . . . .

Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.

Philarète.

JEAN EUSÈBE NIEREMBERGIUS.

1595—1658.

The world hath many things in it which humane affairs have no need of. Virtue also is perfected in few precepts. Though we fill the world with our writings, it is not our volumes that can make us good, but a will to be so. Book-men write out of no other design, but to reform and civilize mankind. . . . To be good there is nothing needful but willingnesse. . . . We care not to use this present life which is our own, but study the secrets of another, which as yet is not ours. We would learn mysteries, and some things that are either out of our way, or else beyond it. Annihilation is more profitable than a fruitlesse being. In this family of Nature, every one hath his task: none may be idle. The best and the noblest are the most laborious. . . . Nothing hath commerce with heaven, but what is pure: he that would be pure, must needs be active. Sin never prevailes against us, but in the absence of Virtue, and Virtue is never absent, but when wee are idle. To preserve the peace of conscience, wee must not feare sufferings.—*Two Excellent Discourses:* (1) "*Temperance and Patience,*" (2) "*Life and Death,*" *written in Latin by Johan: Euseb: Nierembergius. Englished by Henry Vaughan, Silurist.* 1654.

JAMES SHIRLEY. 1594—1666.

. . . but I hope
You have no enmity to the liberal arts:
Learning is an addition beyond
Nobility of birth; honour of blood,
Without the ornament of knowledge,
Is but a glorious ignorance. . . .
. . . . I never knew
More sweet and happy hours than I employ'd
Upon my books.

The Lady of Pleasure, Act ii. *Scene* 1.

SIR WILLIAM WALLER. 1597—1668.

Here is the best solitary company in the world, and in this particular chiefly excelling any other, that in my study I am sure to converse with none but wise men ; but abroad it is impossible for me to avoid the society of fools. What an advantage have I, by this good fellowship, that, besides the help which I receive from hence, in reference to my life after this life, I can enjoy the life of so many ages before I lived !—that I can be acquainted with the passages of three or four thousand years ago, as if they were the weekly occurrences ! Here, without travelling so far as Endor, I can call up the ablest spirits of those times, the learnedest philosophers, the wisest counsellers, the greatest generals, and make them serviceable to me. I can make bold with the best jewels they have in their treasury, with the same freedom that the Israelites borrowed of the Egyptians, and, without suspicion of felony, make use of them as mine own. I can here, without trespassing, go into their vineyards and not only eat my fill of their grapes for my pleasure, but put up as much as I will in my vessel, and store it up for my profit and advantage. . . . I would therefore do in reading as merchants used to do in their trading ; who, in a coasting way, put in at several ports and take in what commodities they afford, but settle their factories in those places only which are of special note ; I would, by-the-bye, allow myself a traffic with sundry authors, as I happen to light upon them, for my recreation ; and I would make the best advantage that I could of them : but I would fix my study upon those only that are of most importance to fit me for action, which is the true end of all learning. Lord, teach me so to study other men's works as not to neglect mine own ; and so to study Thy word, which is Thy work, that it may be "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path "—my candle to work by. Take me off from the curiosity of knowing only to know; from the vanity of knowing only to be known; and from the folly of pretending to know more than I do know: and let it be my wisdom to study to know Thee, who art life eternal. Write Thy law in my heart, and I shall be the best book here.—*Divine Meditations: Meditation upon the Contentment I have in my Books and Study.*

ANTONY TUCKNEY. 1599—1670.

What you say of your little reading and more meditating; I impute to your great modestie, in lessening your own due: or if, as I have cause, I must beleeve you; as I cannot but much approve your course of Meditation; so give mee leave to intreat you, to give diligence to Reading. I have thought, that BERNARD was in the right; when hee said, *lectio, sine meditatione, arida est; meditatio, sine lectione, erronea.* In our meditations, wee may unawares slip into an errour; which, because our own, of our own selves, we are hardlie restrained from; from which another's hand may easilie helpe mee up. And if, for that and other ends, I would gladlie conferre with the living; the same motive may persuade mee to converse with others, that are dead; in their writings: and the rather, because they use to bee more digested; than others' extemporarie discourses; especiallie, if, as you do, we make choice of those, that are most pious and learned. I look-at it, as a kind of Communion of Saints; in which I may expect a greater blessing: but so, as not resting on their authoritie. And shoulde not their writings bee better than my thoughts, yett with mee I find itt thus; that by reading I have more hints, and better rise, for more and better notions; than otherwise of myself I shou'd have reached unto: hereby I shall bee better acquainted with the true historie, stating, and phrasing, of any point of controversie; which otherwise I shall too often stumble-att.—*Third Letter from Dr. Antony Tuckney to Dr. Benjamin Whichcote.—"The Reconciliation of Sinners unto God."* 1651.

FRANCESCO DI RIOJA. 1600—1659.

A little peaceful home
Bounds all my wants and wishes; add to this
My book and friend, and this is happiness.

PETER DU MOULIN. 1600—1684.

Let our dwelling be lightsome, if possible; in a free air, and near a garden. Gardening is an innocent delight. With these, if one may have a sufficient revenue, an honest employment, little business, sortable companys, and especially the conversation of good books with whom a man may converse as little and as much as he pleaseth; he needs little more, as for the exteriour to enjoy all the content that this world can afford. . . . He that both learned to know the world and himself, will soon be capable of this counsel—"To retire within one's self." . . . Persons that have some goodness in their soul, have a closet where they may retire at any time, and yet keep in society.

That closet is their own in-side. . . . That in-side to which the wise man must retire, is his judgment and conscience. Thence to impose silence to business and hush all the noise below,—that with a calm and undisturbed mind, he may consider the nature of the persons and things which he converseth with, what interests he hath in them, and how far they are applicable to God's service, and to the benefit of himself and others. . . . There is no possession sooner lost, than that of one's self. The smallest things rob us of it. . . . *Tecum habitat.* Dwell at home. Keep possession of your soul. Suffer not anything to steal you away from yourself. There is neither profit nor pleasure worth so much, that the soul should go from home to get it. . . . One is always a loser at that game which robs his soul of serenity. . . . Nothing is so great, that for it we should set our mind out of frame. A wise man should not suffer his soul to stir out of her place, and run into disorder. . . . Keep company with a few well-chosen persons, lending ourselves freely to them, but giving ourselves to none but God, nor suffering friendship to grow to slavery. With all sorts of men we must deal ingenuously, yet reservedly, saying what we think, but thinking more than we say, lest we give power to others to take hold of the rudder of our mind. . . . Let them not be admitted by too much familiarity to know the secret avenues of our souls. For in all souls there are some places weaker than the rest.—*A Treatise of Peace and Contentment of Mind: Book VI. To Retire within one's self: To avoid Idleness: Of the care of the Body, and other little Contentments of Life.* 1678.

JOHN EARLE. 1601—1665.

The hermitage by his study has made him somewhat uncouth in the world . . . but practice him a little in men, and brush him over with good company, and he shall out-balance those glisterers, as far as a solid substance does a feather, or gold, gold-lace.—*Microcosmography: A Down-right Scholar.*

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT. 1605—1668.

Books shew the utmost conquests of our minds.
Gondibert.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE. 1605—1682.

'Tis an unjust way of compute, to magnify a weak head for some Latin abilities; and to undervalue a solid judgment, because he knows not the genealogy of Hector. When that notable king of France would have his son to know but one sentence in Latin, had it been a good one, perhaps it had been enough. Natural parts and good judgments rule the world. States are not governed by ergotisms.* Many have ruled well, who could not, perhaps, define a commonwealth; and they who understand not the globe of the earth, command a great part of it. Where natural logick prevails not, artificial too often faileth. Where nature fills the sails, the vessel goes smoothly on; and when judgment is the pilot, the ensurance need not be high. When industry builds upon nature, we may expect pyramids: where that foundation is wanting,

* Conclusions deduced according to the forms of logick.

the structure must be low. They do most by books, who could do much without them; and he that chiefly owes himself unto himself, is the substantial man.—*Christian Morals.*

I have heard some with deep sighs lament the lost lines of Cicero; others with as many groans deplore the combustion of the library of Alexandria: for my own part, I think there be too many in the world; and could with patience behold the urn and ashes of the Vatican, could I, with a few others, recover the perished leaves of Solomon. . . . 'Tis not a melancholy *utinam* of my own, but the desires of better heads, that there were a general synod—not to unite the incompatible difference of religion, but,—for the benefit of learning, to reduce it, as it lay at first, in a few and solid authors; and to condemn to the fire those swarms and millions of rhapsodies, begotten only to distract and abuse the weaker judgments of scholars, and to maintain the trade and mystery of typographers.

. . . . . .

I intend no monopoly, but a community in learning. I study not for my own sake only, but for theirs that study not for themselves. I envy no man that knows more than myself, but pity them that know less. I instruct no man as an exercise of my knowledge, or with an intent rather to nourish and keep it alive in mine own head than beget and propagate it in his. And, in the midst of all my endeavours, there is but one thought that dejects me, that my acquired parts must perish with myself, nor can be legacied among my honoured friends. I cannot fall out or contemn a man for an error, or conceive why a difference in opinion should divide an affection; for controversies, disputes, and argumentations, both in philosophy and in divinity, if they meet with discreet and peaceable natures, do not infringe the laws of charity. In all disputes, so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose; for then reason, like a bad hound, spends upon a false scent, and forsakes the question first started. And this is one reason why controversies are never determined; for, though they be amply proposed, they are scarce at all handled; they do so swell with unnecessary digressions; and the parenthesis on the party is often as large as the main discourse upon the subject. . . . Scholars are men of peace, they bear no arms, but their tongues are sharper than Actius's razor; their pens carry farther, and give a louder report than thunder. I had rather stand the shock of a basilisko than in the fury of a merciless pen.—*Religio Medici.*

THOMAS FULLER. 1608—1661.

When there is no recreation or business for thee abroad, thou may'st have a company of honest old fellows in their leathern jackets in thy study which will find thee excellent divertisement at home. . . . To divert at any time a troublesome fancy, run to thy books; they presently fix thee to them, and drive the other out of thy thoughts. They always receive thee with the same kindness.

Some books are only cursorily to be tasted of. Namely first, voluminous books, the task of a man's life to read them over; secondly, auxiliary books, only to be repaired to on occasions; thirdly, such as are mere pieces of formality, so that if you look on them, you look through them; and he that peeps through the casement of the index, sees as much as if he were in the house. But the laziness of those cannot be excused who perfunctorily pass over authors of consequence, and only trade in their tables and contents. These, like city-cheaters, having gotten the names of all country gentlemen, make silly people believe they have long lived in those places where they never were, and flourish with skill in those authors they never seriously studied.—*The Holy State: Of Books.*

JOHN MILTON. 1608—1674.

For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of Life in them to be as active as that Soule was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve, as in a violl, the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand unlesse warinesse be us'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills Reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a Man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a Life beyond Life.

'Tis true, no age can restore a Life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages doe not oft recover the losse of a rejected Truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season'd Life of Man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdome; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall Life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence, the breath of Reason it selfe, slaies an Immortality rather than a Life.—*Areopagitica.* [*Edition with Notes, &c., by T. Holt White,* 1819.]

Who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
Uncertain and unsettled still remains;
Deep-versed in books, but shallow in himself.
Paradise Regained.

Earl of Clarendon. 1608-1674.

The wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure. That is true; when there is wisdom and learning, they will both grow, and be improved by the opportunity of leisure; but neither wisdom nor learning will be ever got by doing nothing. He that hath little business shall become wise, but he that hath none, shall remain a fool; he that doth not think at all upon what he is to do, will never do any thing well;

and he who doth nothing but think, had as good do nothing at all. The mind that is unexercised, that takes not the air, that it may know the minds of other men, contracts the same aches and cramps in the faculties of the understanding that the body labours with by the want of exercising its limbs; and he that resolves to sit still, can never come to the other end of his journey by other men's running never so fast. There is evidence, by the observation and experience of every man, enough to convince him of the great advantages which attend upon an active life, above what waits upon pure contemplation; that there is a great difference between the abilities of that man who hath contracted himself to any one study, though he excels in it, and him who hath with much less labour attained to a general experimental knowledge of things and persons; and so the greatest divine who hath read all the school men, and all the fathers, and is as wise as most of them were, will be sooner deceived in the market, and pay more for his clothes and for his meat, than his groom will do, who understands that and his horse too.—*An Essay on an Active and Contemplative Life; and why the one should be preferred before the other.*

Sir Matthew Hale. 1609—1676.

Read the Bible reverently and attentively, set your heart upon it, and lay it up in your memory, and make it the direction of your life: it will make you a wise and good man. I have been acquainted somewhat with men and books, and have had long experience in learning, and in the world: there is no book like the

Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use; and it is want of understanding in them that think or speak otherwise. . . . Be diligent in study and in your calling. . . . It will be your wisdom and benefit. It will be a good expense of time, and a prevention from a thousand inconveniences and temptations that otherwise will befall on man.—*Counsels of a Father to one of His Sons, recovering from the Small Pox.*

FRANCIS OSBORNE. *d.* 1659.

A few books well studied, and thoroughly digested, nourish the understanding more than hundreds but gargled in the mouth. . . . Company, if good, is a better refiner of the spirits, than ordinary books. . . . The more you seem to have borrowed from books, the poorer you proclaim your natural parts, which only can properly be called yours. . . . Much reading, like a too great repletion, stops up, through a concourse of diverse, sometimes, contrary opinions, the access of a nearer, newer and quicker invention of your own.—*Advice to a Son.* 2 *Parts.* 1656-8.

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE. 1610—1683.

The Improvement of a little Time may be a gain to all Eternity.

A good Booke may be a Benefactor representing God Himself.

A man is *twice* his own in those Things that come to him by Studie, if he has the Power to *use* and *enjoy* them.—*Sermons.*

SAMUEL SORBIÈRE. 1610—1670.

To appreciate literary toil justly, we should consider what is the value of the subjects on which it is employed; it is not the quantity but the quality of knowledge which is valuable. A glass of water may be as full as the same glass of the most precious fluid. A person may walk as much in a small space, in a course of time, as if in the same period he had marched over the world. In a fleet of ships we value those higher which carry the most precious wares, not the most numerous.—*Sorberiana.*

OWEN FELTHAM. 1610—1678.

All endeavours aspire to eminency: all eminencies do beget an admiration. And this makes me believe that contemplative admiration is a large part of the worship of the Deity. Nothing can carry us so near to God and heaven as this. The mind can walk beyond the sight of the eye; and (though in a cloud) can lift us into heaven while we live. Meditation is the soul's perspective glass: whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God, as if He were nearer hand. I persuade no man to make it his whole life's business. We have bodies, as well as souls. And even this world, while we are in it, ought somewhat to be cared for: contemplation generates; action propagates. St. Bernard compares contemplation to Rachel, which was the more fair; but action to Leah, which was the more fruitful. I will neither always be busy and doing, nor ever shut up in nothing but thoughts. Yet, that which some would call idleness, I will call the sweetest part of my life: and that is—my thinking.—*Resolves.*

EARLY ENGLISH WRITER (UNKNOWN).

The philosopher Zeno, being demanded on a time by what means a man might attain to happiness, made answer: By resorting to the dead, and having familiar conversation with them. Intimating thereby the reading of Ancient and Modern Histories, and endeavouring to have such good instructors, as have been observed in our predecessors. A question also was moved by great King Ptolemy, to one of the wise learned Interpreters: In what occasions a King should exercise himself? Whereto this he replyed. To know those things which formerly have been done; and to read Books of those matters which offer themselves daily, or are fittest for our instant office. . . . Such as are ignorant of things done and past, before themselves had any being; continue still in the estate of children, able to speak or behave themselves no otherwise, and even within the bounds of their Native Countries (in respect of knowledge or manly capacity) they are no more than well seeming dumb Images.—*Preface to First English Translation of Boccacio.* 1620—1625.

GILLES MÉNAGE. 1613—1692.

The following sentence from *Ménage* ("Ménagiana," vol. IV.) is copied from David Garrick's book-plate, in the possession of the compiler:—

La prémière chose qu'on doit faire quand on a emprunté un Livre, c'est de le lire, afin de pouvoir le rendre plûtôt.

Trans. The first thing one ought to do, after having borrowed a book, is to read it, so as to be able to return it as soon as possible.

In the "Ménagiana" is a good pendant to the above:—

M. Toinard dit que la raison pour laquelle on rend si peu les livres prêtéz : c'est qu'il est plus aisé de les rétenir que ce qui est dedans.

Trans. M. Toinard says that the reason why borrowed books are seldom returned, is that it is easier to retain the books themselves than what is inside of them.

JEREMY TAYLOR. 1613—1667.

It conduces much to our content, if we pass by those things which happen to our trouble, and consider that which is pleasing and prosperous; that by the representation of the better, the worse may be blotted out.

It may be thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows.

I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me : what now? let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and, unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too: and still I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate, I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself.—*Holy Living.*

DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD. 1613—1680.

Il est plus necessaire d' étudier les hommes que les livres.

Trans. To study men is more necessary than to study books.

La sagesse est á l'âme ce que la santé est pour le corps.

Trans. Wisdom is to the mind what health is to the body.—*Reflexions ou Sentences et Maxims Morales.*

EARL OF BEDFORD. 1613—1700.

As a great advantage, not only to your book, but health and business also, I cannot but advise and enjoin you to accustom yourself to rise early; for, take it from me, Frank, no lover of his bed did ever yet form great and noble things. . . . Borrow, therefore, of those golden morning hours, and bestow them on your book.—*Advice to His Sons.*

URBAN CHEVREAU. 1613—1701.

A gentleman told me, who had studied under Boxorne, at Leyden (successor to Heinsius, as professor of politics and history in 1653), that this learned professor was equally indefatigable in reading and smoking. To render these two favourite amusements compatible with each other, he pierced a hole through the broad brim of his hat, through which his pipe was conveyed, when he had lighted it. In this manner he read and smoked at the same time. When the bowl of the pipe was empty, he filled it, and repassed it through the same hole; and so kept both his hands at leisure for other employments. At other times he was never without a pipe in his mouth.—*Chevræana.*

RICHARD BAXTER. 1615—1691.

But books have the advantage in many other respects: you may read an able preacher, when you have but a mean one to hear. Every congregation cannot hear the most judicious or powerful preachers; but every single person may read the books of the most powerful and judicious. Preachers may be silenced or banished, when books may be at hand: books may be kept at a smaller charge than preachers: we may choose books which treat of that very subject which we desire to hear of; but we cannot choose what subject the preacher shall treat of. Books we may have at hand every day and hour; when we can have sermons but seldom, and at set times. If sermons be forgotten, they are gone. But a book we may read over and over until we remember it; and, if we forget it, may again peruse it at our pleasure, or at our leisure. So that good books are a very great mercy to the world.—*Christian Directory*, *Part* i., *Chapter* ii.

As for play-books, and romances, and idle tales, I have already shewed in my "Book of Self-Denial," how pernicious they are, especially to youth, and to frothy, empty, idle wits, that know not what a man is, nor what he hath to do in the world. They are powerful baits of the devil, to keep more necessary things out of their minds, and better books out of their hands, and to poison the mind so much the more dangerously, as they are read with more delight and pleasure: and to fill the minds of sensual people with such idle fumes and intoxicating fancies, as may divert them from the serious thoughts of their salvation: and (which is no small loss) to rob them of abundance of that precious time, which was given them for more important business; and which they will wish and wish again at last that they had spent more wisely.—*Christian Directory*, *Part* i., *Direction* xvi.

Because God hath made the excellent holy writings of his servants the singular blessing of this land and age, and many an one may have a good book even any day or hour of the week, that cannot at all become a good preacher; I advise all God's servants to be thankful for so great a mercy, and to make use of it, and be much in reading; for reading with most doth more conduce to knowledge than hearing doth, because you may choose what subjects and the most excellent treatises you please, and may be often at it, and may peruse again and again what you forget, and may take time as you go to fix it on your mind: and with very many it doth more than hearing also to move the heart, though hearing of itself, in this hath the advantage; because lively books may be more easily had, than lively preachers. . . . The truth is, it is not the reading of many books which is necessary to make a man wise or good; but the well-reading of a few, could he be sure to have the best. And it is not possible to read over many on the same subject in great deal of loss of precious time.—*Christian Directory*, *Part* ii., *Chapter* xvi.

. . . And yet the reading of as many as is possible tendeth much to the increase of knowledge, and were the best way, if greater matters were not that way unavoidably to be omitted; life therefore being short, and work great, and knowledge being for love and practice, and no man having leisure to learn all things, a wise man must be sure to lay hold on that which is most useful . . . and the very subjects that are to be understood are numerous, and few men write of all. And on the same subject men have several modes of writing; as one excelleth in accurate method, and another in clear, convincing argumentation, and another in an affectionate, taking style: and the same book that doth one, cannot well do the other, because the same style will not do it.—*Christian Directory*, *Part* iii., *Question* clxxiv.

Great store of all sorts of good books (through the great mercy of God) are common among us: he that cannot buy, may borrow. But take heed that you lose not your time in reading romances, play-books, vain jests, seducing or reviling disputes, or needless controversies. This course of reading Scripture and good books will be many ways to your great advantage.

(1.) It will, above all other ways, increase your knowledge. (2.) It will help your resolutions and holy affections, and direct your lives. (3.) It will make your lives pleasant. The knowledge, the usefulness, and the variety to be found in these works, will be a continual recreation to you, unless you are utterly besotted or debauched. (4.) The pleasure of this will turn you from your fleshly pleasures. You will have no need to go for delight to a play-house, a drinking-house . . . (5.) It will keep you from the sinful loss of time, by idleness or unprofitable employment or pastimes. You will cast away cards and dice, when you find the sweetness of youthful learning.—*Compassionate Counsel to Young Men.*

JOHN OWEN. 1616—1683.

Nor was he [*i.e.*, Sir Thomas Bodley] content with defending the University, for so many years, by the shadow of his invincible name; but promoted and enriched, by his munificence and most acceptable liberality, that universally renowned Treasury of Books, the great ornament not only of the University, but of our whole nation, the Bodleian Library. Fortunate Soul of Bodley! that found so many and such great rivals of its excellence, and then augmenters of its fame! While oblivion covers, and will cover, in long obscurity, innumerable descendants who believed their only duty was to fare sumptuously, Thou hast so widely spread thy glorious memory, that no succession of years, no lapse of time, can obliterate it. Fortunate Bodley! thou shalt not wholly perish; so long as kings, princes, conquerors shall emulously strive to deposit in thy Treasury whatever monuments can anywhere be found of ancient virtue or true learning; and shall not disdain to decorate thy halls with their own statues and images. Here the Prince, then the Count, then the Bishop, in long array, distinguished by various representations of their honours,—the most eminent men—have caused the name of Bodley to be now celebrated by the unanimous voice of the whole world. If only the Divine favour attend us, there is no room to doubt that the University will rise to the most enviable summits of virtue and science, and the loftiest heights of dignity in the literary world.—*From the Third Latin Oration, held before the University of Oxford, by John Owen, D.D., Vice-Chancellor. Works, vol.* xvi., *p.* 496. [*Translated by J. N.*]

ABRAHAM COWLEY. 1618—1667.

. . . In the second place he [the man who is to make himself capable of the good of solitude,] must learn the art and get the habit of thinking; for this too, no less than well speaking, depends upon much practice; and cogitation is the thing which distinguishes the solitude of a god from a wild beast. Now, because the soul of man is not by its own nature or observation furnished with sufficient materials to work upon, it is necessary for it to have continual recourse to learning and books for fresh supplies, so that the solitary life will grow indigent, and be ready to starve, without them; but if once we be thoroughly engaged in the love of letters, instead of being wearied with the length of any day, we shall only complain of the shortness of our whole life.

> "O vita, stulto longa, sapienti brevis !"
> [O life, long to the fool, short to the wise !]

The first minister of state has not so much business in public, as a wise man has in private : if the one have little leisure to be alone, the other has less leisure to be in company ; the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and nature under his consideration. There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, "that a man does not know how to pass his time." It would have been but ill spoken by Methusalem in the nine hundred sixty-ninth year of his life ; so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain to the utmost perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for want of work. But this, you will say, is work only for the learned ; others are not capable either of the employments or divertisements that arrive from letters. I know they are not ; and therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man totally illiterate. But, if any man be so unlearned, as to want entertainment of the little intervals of accidental solitude, which frequently occur in almost all conditions (except the very meanest of the people, who have business enough in the necessary provisions for life,) it is truly a great shame both to his parents and himself; for a very small portion of any ingenious art will stop up all those gaps of our time : either music, or painting, or designing, or chemistry, or history, or gardening, or twenty other things, will do it usefully and pleasantly; and, if he happen to set his affections upon poetry (which I do not advise him too immoderately), that will over-do it; no wood will be thick enough to hide him from the importunities of company or business, which would abstract him from his beloved.—*Essays: Of Solitude.*

As far as my memory can return back into my past life, before I knew or was capable of guessing, what the world, or the glories or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an antipathy imperceptible to themselves, and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holy-days, and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to all constraint, that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragements, to learn without book the common rules of grammar; in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercise out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now, (which, I confess, I wonder at myself) may appear by the latter end of an ode, which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish; but of this part, which I here set down (if a very little were corrected), I should hardly now be much ashamed.

This only grant me; that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.
Some honour I would have,
Not from great deeds, but good alone;
The unknown are better than ill known:
Rumour can ope the grave.
Acquaintance I would have, but when 't depends
Not on the number, but the choice, of friends.

Books should, not business, entertain the light;
And sleep, as undisturb'd as death, the night.
My house a cottage more
Than palace; and should fitting be
For all my use, not luxury.
My garden painted o'er
With Nature's hand, not Art's; and pleasures yield,
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

Thus would I double my life's fading space;
For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear, nor wish, my fate;
But boldly say each night;
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them; I have lived to-day.

. . . . . .

With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university; but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm, which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars to me the hyssop. Yet, I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses, of the world. Now, though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant (for that was the state then of the English and French courts); yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty, which I did not fall in love with, when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me, when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons, whom I liked very well; but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it: a storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage. Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere; though I was in business of great and honourable trust; though I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and public distresses; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish, in a copy of verses to the same effect:

> "Well then; I now do plainly see
> This busy world and I shall ne'er agree," &c.

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from his majesty's happy restoration, but the getting into some moderately convenient retreat in the country; which I thought, in that case, I might easily have compassed, as well as some others, who, with no greater probabilities or pretences, have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. . . . However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design which I had resolved on; I cast myself into it a *corps perdu*, without making capitulations, or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man who says to his soul, "Take thy ease:" I met presently not only with many little encumbrances and impediments, but with so much sickness (a new misfortune to me) as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine: yet I do neither repent, or alter my course. "Non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum;" nothing shall separate me from a mistress which I have loved so long, and have now at last married; though she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor lived yet so quietly with me as I hoped from her:

> ——Nec vos, dulcissima mundi
> Nomina, vos, Musæ, Libertas, Otia, Libri,
> Hortique Silvæque, animâ remanente, relinquam.

Nor by me e'er shall you,
You, of all names the sweetest and the best,
You, Muses, books, and liberty, and rest;
You, gardens, fields, and woods, forsaken be
As long as life itself forsakes not me.

But this is a very pretty ejaculation! Because I have concluded all the other chapters with a copy of verses, I will maintain the humour to the last.—*Essays: Of Myself.*

THOMAS V. BARTHOLIN. 1619—1680.

Without books, God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in Cimmerian darkness.—*Dissertationes de libris legendis. Copenhague,* 1672.

FRANCIS CHARPENTIER. 1620—1702.

I could not help laughing at the expression, though I agree in the sentiment of Heinsius, who with a simple frankness, very natural to a Dutchman, declares, that on reading Plato, he felt so much delight and enthusiasm, that one page of that philosopher's work operated upon him like the intoxication produced by swallowing ten bumpers of wine. I have read some bacchanalian passage very similar to this in Scaliger the Elder: "Herodotus is so charming an author," says he, "that I have as much pain to quit him as I feel in leaving my bottle."—*Carpenteriana.*

HENRY VAUGHAN. 1621—1695.

To His Books.

Bright books! the perspectives to our weak sights,
The clear projections of discerning lights,
Burning and shining thoughts, man's posthume day,
The track of fee'd souls, and their milkie way;
The dead alive and busie, the still voice
Of enlarged spirits, kind Heaven's white decoys!
Who lives with you lives like those knowing flowers,
Which in commerce with light spend all their hours;
Which shut to clouds, and shadows nicely shun,
But with glad haste unveil to kiss the Sun.
Beneath you all is dark and a dead night,
Which whoso lives in wants both health and right.

By sucking you the wise, like bees, do grow
Healing and rich, though this they do most slow,
Because most choicely; for as great a store
Have we of Books as bees of herbs, or more;
And the great task to try, then know, the good,
To discern weeds, and judge of wholesome food,
Is a rare scant performance. For man dyes
Oft ere 'tis done, while the bee feeds and flyes.
But you were all choice flowers; all set and dressed
By old sage florists, who well knew the best;
And I amidst you all am turned to weed,
Not wanting knowledge, but for want of heed.
Then thank thyself, wild fool, that would'st not be
Content to know,—what was too much for thee.

Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems & Private Ejaculations. Part iii. *Thalia Rediviva.* 1650-5. *New Edition, with Memoir, by H. F. Lyte.* 1847.

JOHN HALL. 1627—1656.

We see seldome Learning and Wisdom concurre, because the former is got *sub umbra*, but business doth winnow observations, and the better acquaintance with breathing volumes of men; it teacheth us both better to read them, and to apply what we have read.

Health ought to be nicely respected by a Student. . . . How can a Spirit actuate when she is caged in a lump of fainting flesh? Unseasonable times of study are very obnoxious, as after meales, when Nature is wholy retired to concoction; or at night times, when she begins to droope for want of rest. . . . I have heard it spoken of one of the greatest Ambulatory Pieces of learning at this day, that he would redeeme (if possible) his health with the losse of halfe his Learning.

Some Studies would be hug'd as imployments, others only dandled as sports; the one ought not to trespasse on the other; for to be employed in needlesse things is halfe to be idle.—*Horæ Vacivæ*, 1646.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE. 1628—1698.

This admirable writer, in discoursing on Ancient and Modern Learning—its encouragements and hindrances—points out two great obstacles to its advancement in proportion to what might have been expected from the revival of letters, viz., the absorption of the highest intellects of the time in disputes and contests about religion, and the perpetual succession of foreign and civil wars resulting therefrom:—

Since those accidents which contributed to the restoration of learning, almost extinguished in the western parts of Europe, have been observed, it will be just to mention some that may have hindered the advancement of it, in proportion to what might have been expected from the mighty growth and progress made in the first age after its recovery. One great reason may have been, that, very soon after the entry of learning upon the scene of Christendom, another was made, by many of the new-learned men, into the inquiries and contests about matters of religion—the manners, and maxims, and institutions introduced by the clergy for seven or eight centuries past; the authority of Scripture and tradition; of popes and of councils; of the ancient fathers, and of the latter schoolmen and casuists; of ecclesiastical and civil power. The humour of travelling into all these mystical or entangled matters, mingling with the interests and passions of princes and of parties, and thereby heightened or inflamed, produced infinite disputes, raised violent heats throughout all parts of Christendom, and soon ended in many defections or reformations from the Roman church, and in several new institutions, both ecclesiastical and civil, in divers countries, which have been since rooted and established in almost all the north-west parts. The endless disputes and litigious quarrels upon all these subjects, favoured and encouraged by the interests of the several princes engaged in them, either took up wholly, or generally employed, the thoughts, the studies, the applications, the endeavours of all or most of the finest wits, the deepest scholars, and the most learned writers that the age produced. Many excellent spirits, and the most penetrating genii, that might have made admirable progresses and advances in many other sciences, were sunk and overwhelmed in the abyss of disputes about matters of religion, without ever turning their looks or thoughts any other way. To these disputes of the pen, succeeded those of the sword; and the ambition of great princes and ministers, mingled with the zeal, or covered with the pretences of religion, has for a hundred years past infested Christendom with almost a perpetual course or succession either of civil or of foreign wars; the noise and disorders whereof have been ever the most capital enemies of the Muses, who are seated, by the ancient fables, upon the top of Parnassus, that is, in a place of safety and of quiet from the reach of all noises and disturbances of the regions below.

Books, like proverbs, receive their chief value from the stamp and esteem of ages through which they have passed.—*Essays: On Ancient and Modern Learning.*

ISAAC BARROW. 1630—1677.

Wisdom of itself is delectable and satisfactory, as it implies a revelation of truth and a detection of error to us. 'Tis like light, pleasant to behold, casting a sprightly lustre, and diffusing a benign influence all about; presenting a goodly prospect of things to the eyes of our mind; displaying objects in their due shapes, postures, magnitudes, and colours; quickening our spirits with a comfortable warmth, and disposing our minds to a cheerful activity; dispelling the darkness of ignorance, scattering the mists of doubt, driving away the spectres of delusive fancy; mitigating the cold of sullen melancholy; discovering obstacles, securing progress, and making the passages of life clear, open, and pleasant. We are all naturally endowed with a strong appetite to know, to see, to pursue truth; and with a bashful abhorrency from being deceived and entangled in mistake. And as success in enquiry after truth affords matter of joy and triumph; so being conscious of error and miscarriage therein, is attended with shame and sorrow. These desires wisdom in the most perfect manner satisfies, not by entertaining us with dry, empty, fruitless theories upon mean and vulgar subjects; but by enriching our minds with excellent and useful knowledge, directed to the noblest objects, and serviceable to the highest ends.

The calling of a scholar is one the design whereof conspireth with the general end of our being; the perfection of our nature in its endowments, and the fruition of it in its best operations. It is a calling, which doth not employ us in bodily toil, in worldly care, in pursuit of trivial affairs, in sordid drudgeries; but in those angelical operations of soul, the contemplation of truth, and attainment of wisdom; which are the worthiest exercises of our reason, and sweetest entertainments of our mind; the most precious wealth, and most beautiful ornaments of our soul; whereby our faculties are improved, are polished and refined, are enlarged in their power and use by habitual accessions: the which are conducible to our own greatest profit and benefit, as serving to rectify our wills, to compose our affections, to guide our lives in the ways of virtue, to bring us unto felicity. It is a calling, which, being duly followed, will most sever us from the vulgar sort of men, and advance us above the common pitch; enduing us with light to see further than other men, disposing us to affect better things, and to slight those meaner objects of human desire, on which men commonly dote; freeing us from the erroneous conceits and from the perverse affections of common people. It is said that *men of learning are double-sighted:* but it is true, that in many cases they see infinitely further than a vulgar sight doth reach. And if a man by serious study doth acquire a clear and solid judgment of things, so as to assign to each its due weight and price; if he accordingly be inclined in his heart to affect and pursue them; if from clear and right notions of things, a meek and ingenuous temper of mind, a command and moderation of passions, a firm integrity, and a cordial love of goodness do spring, he thereby becometh another kind of thing, much different from those brutish men (beasts of the people) who blindly follow the motions of their sensual appetite, or the suggestions of their fancy, or their mistaken prejudices.

It is a calling which hath these considerable advantages, that, by virtue of improvement therein, we can see with our own eyes, and guide ourselves by our own reasons, not being led blindfold about, or depending precariously on the conduct of others, in matters of highest concern to us; that we are exempted from giddy credulity, from wavering levity, from fond admiration of persons and things, being able to distinguish of things, and to settle our judgments about them, and to get an intimate acquaintance with them, assuring to us their true nature and worth; that we are also thereby rescued from admiring ourselves, and that overweening self-conceitedness, of which the Wise Man saith, *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*

. . . . . .

It is a calling most exempt from the cares, the crosses, the turmoils, the factious jars, the anxious intrigues, the vexatious molestations of the world; its business lying out of the road of those mischiefs, wholly lying in solitary retirement, or being transacted in the most innocent and ingenuous company. It is a calling least subject to any danger or disappointment; wherein we may well be assured not to miscarry or lose our labour; for the merchant indeed by manifold accidents may lose his voyage, or find a bad market; the husbandman may plough and sow in vain: but the student hardly can fail of improving his stock, and reaping a good crop of knowledge; especially if he study with a conscientious mind, and pious reverence to God, imploring his gracious help and blessing. It is a calling, the business whereof doth so exercise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us; being not (as other occupations are) a drawing in a mill, or a nauseous tedious repetition of the same work; but a continued progress towards fresh objects; our mind not being staked to one or a few poor matters, but having immense fields of contemplation, wherein it may everlastingly expatiate, with great proficiency and pleasure.

. . . . . .

It is that which recommendeth a man in all company, and procureth regard, every one yielding attention and acceptance to instructive, neat, apposite discourse (that which the scripture calleth *acceptable, pleasant, gracious words;*) men think themselves obliged thereby, by receiving information and satisfaction from it; and accordingly, *Every man* (saith the Wise Man) *shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer;* and—*for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend;* and *the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious.* It is that, an eminency wherein purchaseth lasting fame, and a life after death, in the good memory and opinion of posterity: *Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation.* A fame no less great, and far more innocent, than acts of chivalry and martial prowess; for is not Aristotle as renowned for teaching the world with his pen, as Alexander for conquering it with his sword? Is not one far oftener mentioned than the other? Do not men hold themselves much more obliged to the learning of the philosopher, than to the valour of the warrior? Indeed the fame of all others is indebted to the pains of the scholar, and could not subsist but with and by his fame: *Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori;* learning consecrateth itself and its subject together to immortal remembrance. It is a calling that fitteth a man for all conditions and fortunes; so that he can enjoy prosperity with moderation, and sustain adversity with comfort: he that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.

. . . . . .

The exercise of our mind in rational discursiveness about things in quest of truth; canvassing questions, examining arguments for and against; how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our natural parts, enabling us to fix our thoughts on objects without roving, inuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about matters proposed; preserving us from being easily abused by captious fallacies, gulled by specious pretences, tossed about with every doubt or objection started before us!

. . . . . .

The reading of books, what is it but conversing with the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate thoughts, choicest notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression, and digested in exact method?

. . . . . .

How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expense of others, informing us about the ways of action, and the consequences thereof by examples, without our own danger or trouble!—*Sermons:* "*Of Industry in our Particular Calling as Scholars.*"

CHARLES COTTON. 1630—1687.

[The friend of Isaac Walton, and Translator of Montaigne's Essays.]

How calm and quiet a delight
  Is it, alone,
To read, and meditate, and write,
  By none offended, and offending none.
To walk, ride, sit, or sleep at one's own ease,
And, pleasing a man's self, none other to displease.

Poems, 1689. *The Retirement. To Mr. Isaac Walton.*

Who from the busy World retires,
  To be more useful to it still,
And to no greater good aspires
  But only the eschewing ill.
Who, with his Angle, and his Books,
  Can think the longest day well spent,
And praises God when back he looks,
  And finds that all was innocent.
This man is happier far than he
  Whom public Business oft betrays
Through labyrinths of Policy,
  To crooked and forbidden ways.

Poems, 1689. *Contentation. Directed to my Dear Father, and most Worthy Friend, Mr. Isaac Walton.*

PETER DANIEL HUET. 1630—1721.

They who endure the toil of study, with a view to riches and honours, will be very much disappointed. All the world has heard of a French treatise on the Miseries of Scholars, but none has appeared descriptive of their felicities. In fact, the retired life, the inactivity with respect to all business in common life, or public employments, which an attention to study requires, and that internal recluseness and abstraction of mind, so peculiar to the student, are all circumstances averse from the acquisition of wealth. He on whom the Muses have smiled in his infancy will scorn the praises of the multitude, the fascination of wealth, and the enticements of honours; and will find that his toil is the only adequate reward which can satisfy the mind of a scholar. He will not be repelled by the length, nor disgusted by the drudgery of his labours. His passion for learning will increase with his acquirements; and, whilst his diligence procures him fresh information, he will discover his numerous deficiencies, and be induced to redouble his attention. These sentiments are not declamatory. I write from experience of the truths which I advance, the experience of my whole life, which I wish protracted for no other reason than that I may employ it in future investigations. Nor let the hoary student be discouraged, should he find himself sometimes going backward instead of forward; but impute his misfortune to the incapacities of age, and to the languor that faculties long harassed by continual application must necessarily endure. . . . .

To constitute a learned man, the gifts of nature are in the first line of desiderata; a solid understanding, a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a healthful and vigorous body, a disposition steady, constant, and uniform; diligence which years cannot impair, an insatiable thirst of knowledge, and an invincible attachment to reading, &c. Without the gifts of fortune, nature will have been generous in vain.

——Cujus conatibus obstat
Res angusta domi,

must confine his exertions to defend himself from the exigencies of the moment. We must think of merely living, before we can endeavour to live pleasantly and with distinction; and the conveniences of life must be a consideration superior to the love of study. . . .

An exclusive application to books, as the sole employment and the pleasure of life, is the choice of the student himself, inspired with a love of letters; which neither the fascination of riches or ambition can supplant, nor the fears of poverty, nor the dread of labour and obscurity, can extinguish. Horace, in the Ode which Julius Scaliger so highly prized, that he would rather have been the writer of it than a King of Spain, has clothed the above sentiments with all the charms that brilliant composition, united with truth, are capable of bestowing.

. . . . . .

"When we consider," says the Abbé Olivet *(L'Eloge Histor. de M. Huet)*, "that he lived to the age of ninety years and upwards, that he had been a hard student from his infancy, that he had had almost all his time to himself, that he enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health, that he had always some one to read to him, even at his meals; that, in one word, to borrow his own language, neither the heat of youth, nor a multiplicity of business, nor the love of company, nor the hurry of the world, had ever been able to moderate his love of study, we may fairly conclude him to have been the most learned man that any age ever produced."—*Huetiana.*

JOHN LOCKE. 1632—1704.

Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company, and reflection must finish him.

Those who have read of everything are thought to understand everything too; but it is not always so—Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what is read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections; unless we chew them over again, they will not give us strength and nourishment.

The End and Use of a little Insight in those Parts of Knowledge, which are not a Man's proper Business, is to accustom our Minds to all Sorts of Ideas, and the proper Ways of examining their Habitudes, and Relations. This gives the Mind a Freedom; and the exercising the Understanding in the several Ways of Enquiry and Reasoning which the most skilful have made use of, teaches the Mind Sagacity and Wariness, and a Suppleness to apply itself more closely and dexterously to the Bents and Turns of the matter in all its researches. Besides this universal Taste in all the Sciences, with an Indifferency, before the Mind is possessed of any one in particular, and grown into a Love and Admiration of what is made its Darling, will prevent another Evil very commonly to be observed in those who have been reasoned only by one Part of Knowledge. Let a Man be given to the Contemplation of one Sort of Knowledge and that will become everything. The Mind will take such a Tincture from a Familiarity with that Object, that everything else, how remote soever, will be brought under the same View. A Metaphysician will bring Plowing and Gardening immediately to abstract notions. The History of Nature will signify nothing to him. An Alchymist, on the contrary, shall reduce Divinity to the Maxims of the Laboratory, explain Morality by Sal Sulphur and

Mercury, and allegorise the Scripture itself, and the sacred Mysteries thereof, into the Philosopher's Stone. And I heard once a Man who had a more than ordinary Excellency in Musick seriously accommodate Moses seven Days of the first Week, to the Notes of Musick, as if from thence had been taken the Measure and Method of Creation.

'Tis of no small Consequence to keep the Mind from such a Possession, which I think is best done by giving it a fair and equal View of the whole intellectual World, wherein it may see the Order, Rank, and Beauty of the whole, and give a just allowance to the distinct Provinces of the several Sciences, in the due Order, and usefulness of each of them.—*Conduct of the Understanding.*

ROBERT SOUTH. 1633—1716.

The pleasure and delight of knowledge and learning far surpasseth all other in nature: for, shall the pleasures of the affections so exceed the senses, as much as the obtaining of desire or victory exceedeth a song or a dinner; and must not, of consequence, the pleasures of the intellect or understanding exceed the pleasures of the affections? We see in all other pleasures there is satiety, and after they be used, their verdure departeth; which sheweth well they be but deceits of pleasure, and not pleasure; and that it was the novelty which pleased, and not the quality: and therefore we see that voluptuous men turn friars, and ambitious princes turn melancholy. But of knowledge there is no satiety, but satisfaction and appetite are perpetually interchangeable.

Seldom is there *much* spoke, but something or other had better *not* been spoke.

He who has published an injurious book, sins, as it were, in his very grave; corrupts others while he is rotting himself.

Much *reading* is like much *eating*, wholly useless without *digestion.—Sermons.*

SIR GEORGE MACKENZIE. 1636—1691.

If variety be that which is admired in Society, certainly our own thoughts, or other men's Books, can in these far exceed Conversation; possessing above it this Advantage, that one can never be either importun'd or betray'd by these, as is much to be feared from the other. . . . O what a divine State then must Solitude be, wherein a Virtuous and Thoughtful Inactivity begets in us a Tranquility, not conceivable by such as do not possess it! Solitude requires no avarice to maintain its Table. It is satisfied without Coaches, Lacqueys, Treasurers and Embroideries. The Solitary Man is not disquieted at the Infrequency of Guests. . . . Tranquility of Spirit is peculiar to Philosophy, and is the Guest of Solitude. . . . How can that Soul rust which is in continual Exercise?—*A Moral Essay preferring Solitude to Publick Employment.*

EDMUND HALLEY. 1656—1742.

Dr. Halley used to say, "close study prolonged a man's life, by keeping him out of harm's way."—*Southey's Common-Place Book. Third Series. Quoted from Ivimey's "History of the Baptists."*

JOHN DE LA BRUYÈRE. 1644—1696.

Where a book raises your spirit, and inspires you with noble and courageous feelings, seek for no other rule to judge the event by; it is good and made by a good workman.

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DIVINE.

(Unverified.)

There be those that ungratefully complain of the heaviness of time, as if we could have too much of God's most precious gift of life and its containings. Let such persons consider that there be daily duties to be well performed which do not exclude innocent recreations and the privileged opportunities of silent conversation with the greatest minds and spirits, in their most chosen words, in their books, that lie ready and offer themselves to us if we would.

JEREMY COLLIER. 1650—1726.

The Diversions of Reading, though they are not always of the strongest Kind, yet they generally Leave a better Effect than the grosser Satisfactions of Sense: For if they are well chosen, they neither dull the Appetite, nor strain the Capacity. On the contrary, they refresh the Inclinations, and strengthen the Power, and improve under Experiment: And which is best of all, they Entertain and Perfect at the same time; and convey Wisdom and Knowledge through Pleasure. By Reading a Man does as it were Antedate his Life, and makes himself contemporary with the

Ages past. And this way of running up beyond one's Nativity, is much better than Plato's Pre-existence; because here a Man knows something of the State, and is the wiser for it; which he is not in the other.

In conversing with Books we may chuse our Company, and disengage without Ceremony or Exception. Here we are free from the Formalities of Custom, and Respect: We need not undergo the Penance of a dull Story, from a Fop of Figure; but may shake off the Haughty, the Impertinent, and the Vain, at Pleasure. Besides, Authors, like Women, commonly Dress when they make a Visit. Respect to themselves makes them polish their Thoughts, and exert the Force of their Understanding more than they would, or can do, in ordinary Conversation: So that the Reader has as it were the Spirit and Essence in a narrow Compass; which was drawn off from a much larger Proportion of Time, Labour, and Expence. Like an Heir, he is born rather than made Rich, and comes into a Stock of Sense, with little or no Trouble of his own. 'Tis true, a Fortune in Knowledge which Descends in this manner, as well as an inherited Estate, is too often neglected, and squandered away; because we do not consider the Difficulty in Raising it.

Books are a Guide in Youth, and an Entertainment for Age. They support us under Solitude, and keep us from being a Burthen to our selves. They help us to forget the Crossness of Men and Things; compose our Cares, and our Passions; and lay our Disappointments asleep. When we are weary of the Living, we may repair to the Dead, who have nothing of Peevishness, Pride, or Design, in their Conversation. However, to be constantly in the Wheel has neither Pleasure nor Improvement in it. A Man may as well expect to grow stronger by always Eating, as wiser by always Reading. Too much over-charges Nature, and turns more into Disease than Nourishment. 'Tis Thought and Digestion which makes Books serviceable, and gives Health and Vigour to the Mind. Neither ought we to be too Implicit or Resigning to Authorities, but to examine before we Assent, and preserve our Reason in its just Liberties. To walk always upon Crutches, is the way to lose the Use of our Limbs. Such an absolute Submission keeps us in a perpetual Minority, breaks the Spirits of the Understanding, and lays us open to Imposture.

But Books well managed afford Direction and Discovery. They strengthen the Organ, and enlarge the Prospect, and give a more universal Insight into Things, than can be learned from unlettered Observation. He who depends only upon his own Experience, has but a few Materials to work upon. He is confined to narrow Limits both of Place and Time: And is not fit to draw a large Model, and to pronounce upon Business which is complicated and unusual. . . . To take Measures wholly from Books, without looking into Men and Business, is like travelling in a Map, where though Countries and Cities are well enough distinguished, yet Villages and private Seats are either Over-looked, or too generally Marked for a Stranger to find. And therefore he that would be a Master, must Draw by the Life, as well as Copy from Originals, and joyn Theory and Experience together.—*Essays upon Several Moral Subjects: Of the Entertainment of Books.*

ARCHBISHOP FÉNÉLON. 1651—1715.

If the crowns of all the kingdoms of the Empire were laid down at my feet in exchange for my books and my love of reading, I would spurn them all.

CHARLES BLOUNT. 1654—1697.

Books are the only Records of Time, which excite us to imitate the past Glories of our Ancestors. We owe our Philosophy or Contemplation of God in his Works, to the same Cause. . . . Thus we see that Histories make Men wise; Poets, witty; Mathematicks, subtle; Natural Philosophy, deep; Moral Philosophy, grave; Logick and Rhetorick, able to dispute; all which Excellencies are to be acquired only from Books; since no Vocal Learning is so effectual for Instruction, as Reading.—*A Just Vindication of Learning.* 1695.

LONSDALE (JOHN, LORD VISCOUNT).
1655—1700.

Next to his friends, in the selection of whom he was more than commonly nice and exact, his books were his best and most faithful companions, and one of the greatest comforts of his life. And here a pleasing domestic scene presents itself to our view. His eldest son, standing near him while he is writing in his library, is thus animated to the attainment of that knowledge which is treasured up in the volumes of ancient and modern literature.

"What a pleasure is it one day to be a judge of the reasonableness and affection of what I am doing, and at the same time seeing round me whatever the world has produced most worth knowing. When I have at hand all that philosophers, divines, historians, poets, mathematicians, architects, &c., understood, digested into the best method and order, communicative of whatever I am most desirous to know without any constraint upon me, ready to be laid by without offence when weary of them, and to be resumed without ceremony; what would a man give for so easy a friend? And here you have collected together the most excellent of all mortals in all ages, of all countries, without being troubled with either their impertinance, insolence, affectation, moroseness, or pride, the common failings of knowing great and learned men. But as the use of well-chosen books is the most excellent benefit of anything that it hath pleased God to bestow upon the children of men, so an ill choice of them is, in the opposite extreme, the most pernicious mischief that can be. Good books instruct us in our duty toward God, toward man, and to ourselves; they form the mind to just and proper thoughts, make us good servants to God, good subjects, and useful to the state both as governors and servants, and whatever else relates to the common advantages of life; ill ones deprave the mind, and have in all those respects a quite contrary effect."

He then proceeds, with great diffidence and modesty, to recommend to his son those books which he thought most worthy of his perusal.—*Life and Character of John, Lord Viscount Lonsdale, author of "Memoir of the Reign of James II.," by his uncle, the Rev. Dr. Zouch, Prebendary of Durham. York,* 1808.

THOMAS FULLER, M.D. 1654—1734.

Tell me not what thou hast heard and read, and only so; but what (after thy hearing and reading) thou hast taken into thy Meditation, found to be Truth, settled with Judgment, fixed in thy Memory, embraced in thy affections; and then a long time practised, and so made up to be truly thine own. This, and only this, is rightly called Learning.—*Introductio ad Sapientiam.* 1731.

JOHN NORRIS. 1657—1711.

Concerning my *Essays* and *Discourses* I have only this to say, that I design'd in them as much *Brevity* and *Clearness* as are consistent with each other, and to abound in *sense* rather than *words.* I wish all men would observe this in their writings more than they do. I'm sure the *multitude of Books* and the *shortness of Life* require it, and sense will lye in a little compass if men would be perswaded to vent no Notions but what they are *Masters* of, and were *Angels* to write, I fancy we should have but few *Folio's.* This is what I *design'd* and *endeavour'd* in the *whole.* Whether I have *attain'd* it or no, I submit to *Judgment.—Introduction to Miscellanies.*

This over-fond and superstitious deference to Authority, makes men, otherwise senseful and Ingenious, quote such things many times out of an old dull Author, and with a peculiar emphasis of commendation too, as would never pass even in ordinary conversation; and which they themselves would never have took notice of, had not such an Author said it. But now, no sooner does a man give himself leave to think, but he perceives how absurd and unreasonable 'tis, that one man should prescribe to all Posterity: that men, like beasts, should follow the foremost of the Herd; and that venerable *non-sense* should be prefer'd before *new-sense:* He considers, that that which we call *Antiquity*, is properly the nonage of the world; that the sagest of his Authoritys were once new; and that there is no other difference between an antient Author and himself, but only that of time; which, if of any advantage, 'tis rather on his side, as living in a more refined and mature age of the world. And thus having cast off this *Intellectual* slavery, he addicts himself to no Author, Sect or Party; but freely picks up Truth where-ever he can find it; puts to Sea upon his own bottom; holds the Stern himself; and now, if ever, we may expect new discoverys.

The Solitary and Contemplative man sits as safe in his Retirement as one of *Homer's Heroes* in a Cloud, and has this only trouble from the follies and extravagancies of men, that he *pitties* them. He does not, it may be, laugh so loud, but he is better *pleas'd:* He is not perhaps so often *merry*, but neither is he so often *disgusted;* he lives to himself and God, full of Serenity and Content. . . . Neither are our *intellectual* advantages less indebted to Solitude. . . . All kinds of *Speculative* knowledg as well as *practical*, are best improved by Solitude. Indeed there is much talk about the great benefit of keeping Great men company, and thereupon 'tis usually reckon'd among the *disad-*

vantages of a *Country* life, that those of that condition want the opportunities of a *Learned Conversation.* But to confess the truth, I think there is not so much in it as people generally imagine. . . . A man may be a constant attendant at the *Conclaves* of Learned men all his life long, and yet be no more the wiser for't than a *Book-worm* is for dwelling in *Libraries.* And therefore, to speak ingenuously, I don't see for my part wherein the great advantage of great Conversation lies, as the humours of men are pleas'd to order it. Were I to inform my self in business, and the management of affairs, I would sooner talk with a plain illiterate Farmer or Tradesman than the greatest *Vertuoso.* . . . So that I find I must take refuge at my Study at last, and there *redeem* the Time that I have *lost* among the *Learned.—A Collection of Miscellanies: "Of the Advantages of Thinking;" "Of Solitude."*

Here in this shady lonely Grove
I *sweetly think* my hours away,
Neither with *Business* vex'd, nor *Love,*
Which in the *World* bear such *Tyrannic* sway :
No Tumults can my *close Apartment find,*
Calm as those *Seats above,* which know no Storm
nor Wind.

Let *Plots* and *News* embroil the State,
Pray what's that to my *Books* and *Me?*
Whatever be the *Kingdom's* Fate,
Here I am sure t' *enjoy* a *Monarchy.*
Lord of my self, accountable to none,
Like the first Man in *Paradise,* alone.

Poems: "The Retirement."

ROGER GALE. 1672—1744.

I have been very busy in ordering my study and making an exact catalogue of the books, a drye, tedious piece of slavery, God wott, but I have now finished it alphabetically, so that I can call any of my old leather coats down very readily whenever I please, and enjoy his company as my fancy directs. You may perhaps think I have much mispent my time and been at all these pains to little purpose; but many a tedious hour has it helped me off with, and I flatter myself that many more will slide away with great pleasure, at least with less uneasiness, by their assistance.—*Roger Gale to the Rev. W. Stukeley, M.D., May* 20, 1743, *The Family Memoirs of Stukeley, &c. (Surtees Society)*, 1880, *vol.* i. 359-60.

JONATHAN SWIFT, 1667—1745.

When I am reading a book, whether wise or silly, it seems to me to be alive and talking to me.

Sometimes I read a book with pleasure, and detest the author.

When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him.—*Thoughts on Various Subjects.*

WILLIAM CONGREVE. 1670—1729.

Read, read, sirrah, and refuse your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh: read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes, shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding.—*Plays: "Love for Love."*

SIR RICHARD STEELE. 1671—1729.

Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body. As by the one, health is preserved, strengthened, and invigorated; by the other, virtue (which is the health of the mind) is kept alive, cherished and confirmed. But as exercise becomes tedious and painful, when we make use of it only as the means of health, so reading is apt to grow uneasy and burthensome when we apply ourselves to it for our improvement in virtue. For this reason, the virtue which we gather from a fable or an allegory, is like the health we get by hunting; as we are engaged in an agreeable pursuit that draws us on with pleasure, and makes us insensible of the fatigues that accompany it.—*The Tatler, No.* 147.

JOSEPH ADDISON. 1672—1719.

Aristotle tells us, that the world is a copy or transcript of those ideas which are in the mind of the first Being, and that those ideas which are in the mind of man, are a transcript of the world. To this we may add, that words are the transcript of those ideas which are in the mind of man and that writing or printing are the transcript of words. As the Supreme Being has expressed, and as it were printed his ideas in the creation, men express their ideas in books, which by this great invention of these latter ages may last as long as the sun and moon, and perish only in the general wreck of nature. . . . There is no other method of fixing those thoughts which arise and disappear in the mind of man, and transmitting them to the last periods of time; no other method of giving a permanency to our ideas, and preserving the knowledge of any particular period, when his body is mixed with the common mass of matter, and his soul retired into the world of spirits. Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn. . . . All other arts of perpetuating our ideas continue but a short time. . . . The circumstance which gives authors an advantage above all these great masters, is this, that they can multiply their originals; or rather can make copies of their works, to what number they please, which shall be as valuable as the originals themselves. This gives a great author something like a prospect of eternity, but at the same time deprives him of those other advantages which artists meet with. The artist finds greater returns in profit, as the author in fame. What an inestimable price would a Virgil or a Homer, a Cicero or an Aristotle bear, were their works, like a statue, a building, or a picture, to be confined only in one place and made the property of a single person!

If writings are thus durable, and may pass from age to age throughout the whole course of time, how careful should an author be of committing anything to print that may corrupt posterity, and poison the minds of men with vice and error! Writers of great talents, who employ their parts in propagating immorality, and seasoning vicious sentiments with wit and humour, are to be looked upon as the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind. They leave books behind them (as it is said of those who die in distempers which breed an ill will towards their own species) to scatter infection and destroy their posterity.—*Spectator.*

THOS. SHERIDAN. 1684—1738.

While you converse with lords and dukes,
I have their betters here—my books:
Fixed in an elbow-chair at ease,
I choose companions as I please.
I'd rather have one single shelf
Than all my friends, except yourself;
For after all that can be said
Our best acquaintance are the dead.
Addressed to Swift.

ISAAC WATTS. 1674—1748.

By reading, we acquaint ourselves with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of the living and the dead, in the most remote actions, and in the most distant ages; and that with as much ease as though they lived in our own age and nation. By reading of books, we may learn something, from all parts, of mankind; whereas, by observation we learn all from ourselves, and only what comes within our own direct cognisance. By conversation we can only enjoy the unction of a very few persons, those who are moving, and live at the same time that we do—that is, our neighbours and contemporaries.

By study and meditation we improve the hints that we have acquired by observation, conversation, and reading; we take more time in thinking, and by the labour of the mind we penetrate deeper into the themes of knowledge, and carry our thoughts sometimes much farther on many subjects, than we ever met with, either in the books of the dead or discourses of the living. It is our own reasoning that draws out one truth from another, and forms a whole scheme of science from a few hints which we borrowed elsewhere.—*On the Improvement of the Mind.*

CONYERS MIDDLETON. 1683—1750.

I persuade myself that the life and faculties of man, at the best but short and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or laudably than in the search of knowledge; and especially of that sort which relates to our duty, and conduces to our happiness. In these enquiries, therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me, I readily pursue and endeavour to trace it to its source, without any reserve or caution of pushing the discovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the discovery of anything which is true as a valuable acquisition of society, which cannot possibly hurt or obstruct the good effect of any other truth whatsoever; for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain which fall separately into the river, mix themselves at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current.—*Miscellaneous Works.*

ALEXANDER POPE. 1688—1744.

At this day, as much company as I have kept, and as much as I love it, I love reading better—I would rather be employed in reading than in the most agreeable conversation.—*Spence's Anecdotes.*

BARON MONTESQUIEU. 1689—1755.

Aimer à lire, c'est faire en échange des heures d'ennui que l'on doit avoir en sa vie contre des heures delicieuses.

[Love of reading enables a man to exchange the weary hours which come to everyone, for hours of delight.]

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU. 1690—1762.

I yet retain, and carefully cherish my love of reading. If relays of eyes were to be hired like post-horses, I would never admit any but silent companions: they afford a constant variety of entertainment, which is almost the only one pleasing in the enjoyment, and inoffensive in the consequence. . . . Every woman endeavours to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she never will appear: and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement, to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. . . . Daughter! daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, and stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. If I called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings; happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praise from others to no purpose; eternally disappointing and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I could confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he could not know how to manage; I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion: he fortifies his health by exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people; but if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends.—*Letters*, 1752-7.

LORD CHESTERFIELD. 1694—1773.

Lay aside the best book whenever you can go into the best company; and, depend upon it, you change for the better. . . . Throw away none of your time upon those trivial futile books, published by idle or necessitous authors, for the amusement of idle and ignorant readers. *Certum pete finem;* have some one object for those leisure moments, and pursue that object invariably till you have attained it. . . . The ignorant and the weak only are idle. . . . Knowledge does not cloy by possession, but increases desire; which is the case with very few pleasures. Nobody ever lent themselves more than I did, when I was young, to the pleasure and dissipation of good company. I even did it too much. But then I can assure you that I always found time for serious studies; and when I could find it in no other way, I took it out of my sleep; for I resolved always to rise early in the morning, however late I went to bed at night. . . . Rise early, and at the same hour, every morning, how late soever you may have sat up the night before. This secures you an hour or two, at least, of reading or reflection, before the common interruptions of the morning begin.—*Letters to His Son.*

AROUET DE VOLTAIRE. 1694—1778.

You despise books; you, whose whole lives are absorbed in the vanities of ambition, the pursuit of pleasure, or in indolence; but remember that all the known world, excepting only savage nations, is governed by Books.—*Dictionnaire Phil.: Art.* "*Books.*"

MATTHEW GREEN. 1696—1737.

And shorten tedious hours with books.

The Spleen.

JAMES THOMSON. 1700—1748.

Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat
Between the groaning forest and the shore,
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves;
A rural, sheltered, solitary scene;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty dead;
Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,
As gods beneficent, who bless'd mankind
With arts, with arms, and humanized a world.
Roused at th' inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-lived volume; and, deep musing, hail
The sacred shades, that, slowly rising, pass
Before my wond'ring eye.

. . . . . .

First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul, to thoughts like yours,
Silence, thou lonely power! the door be thine;
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unclouded wit, and humour ever gay.

. . . . . .

Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter-gloom, with friends of pliant souls,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired.

The Seasons: "Winter."

JOHN WESLEY. 1703—1791.

Read the most useful books, and that regularly, and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or, at least, five hours in four-and-twenty.

"But I read only the Bible." Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. "Just so," said George Bell. "And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible, nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm." If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. "Bring the books," says he, "but especially the parchments," those wrote on parchment. "But I have no taste for reading." Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.—*The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, 1830, *vol.* viii., *p.* 315, "*Minutes of Some Late Conversations;*" *&c.*

SAMUEL JOHNSON. 1709—1784.

"Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in the day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge."

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle, superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation," said he, "must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. . . . The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains a full view."

He said, that for general improvement a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to; though, to be wise, if a man have a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "what we read with inclination works a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read." He told us he read Fielding's "Amelia" through without stopping. He said, "If a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it, to go to the beginning. He may perhaps not feel again the inclination."

"Books that can be held in the hand, and carried to the fireside, are the best after all."—*Boswell's "Johnson."*

He was never a close student, and used to advise young people never to be without a book in their pocket to read at bye-times, when they had nothing else to do. "It has been by that means that all my knowledge has been gained, except what I have picked up by running about the world with my wits ready to observe and my tongue ready to talk." . . .—*Mrs. Piozzi: "Recollections."*

A little plausibility of discourse, and acquaintance with unnecessary speculations, are dearly purchased, when it excludes those instructions which fortify the heart with resolution, and exalt the spirit to independence.—*The Rambler, No.* 180.

DAVID HUME. 1712—1776.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.—*The Life of David Hume, written by Himself.*

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU. 1712—1778.

When the understanding is once enlarged by the custom of reflecting, it is always much best to find one's self the things which are to be met with in books.

This is the true secret to fix them well in the head, and make them our own. The great error of those who study, is trusting too much to their books, and not extracting enough from their own fund; not thinking that, of all sophists, our own reason is almost always that which deceives us the least; as soon as they reflect, every one feels what is good; every one discovers what is beautiful. We have no occasion to learn to distinguish either one or the other. . . . The soul is elevated, the heart is inflamed, by contemplating the highest models; by reflecting on them, we seek to become like them, and no longer suffer anything meddling without a mortal disgust. The mind, no more than the body, carries more than it can bear. When the understanding makes things its own, before it lays them up in the memory, what we afterwards draw from it, is our own; while, by overloading the memory, without its knowledge, we run the risk of extracting nothing from it, which is our own. . . . Reason is not a piece of furniture which we can lay aside, and take again at our pleasure; whoever has been able to live ten years without thinking, will never think during his whole life.

DENYS DIDEROT. 1713—1789.

Spoken sentences are like sharp nails, which force truth upon us.—*Diderotiana.*

LAURENCE STERNE. 1713—1768.

The mind should be accustomed to make wise reflections, and draw curious conclusions as it goes along; the habitude of which made Pliny the younger affirm that he never read a book so bad but he drew some profit from it.

Digressions incontestably are the sunshine, they are the life, the soul of reading.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE. 1714—1763.

I hate a style, as I do a garden that is wholly flat and regular; that slides along like an eel, and never rises to what one can call an inequality.—*Essays*: "*On Writing and Books.*"

HORACE WALPOLE. 1717—1797.

Without grace no book can live, and with it the poorest may have its life prolonged. . . . I sometimes wish for a catalogue of lounging books—books that one takes up in the gout, low spirits, *ennui*, or when in waiting for company. Some novels, gay poetry, odd whimsical authors, as Rabelais, &c. A *catalogue raisonné* of such might be itself a good lounging book.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH. 1728—1774.

An author may be considered as a merciful substitute to the legislature. He acts not by punishing crimes, but by preventing them.

There is improbable pleasure attending the life of a voluntary student. The first time I read an excellent book, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend; when I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one.—*Citizen of the World.*

WILLIAM DODD. 1729—1777.

Books, dear books,
Have been, and are my comforts, morn and night,
Adversity, prosperity, at home,
Abroad, health, sickness,—good or ill report,
The same firm friends; the same refreshments rich,
And source of consolation.
Thoughts in Prison.

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING.
1729—1781.

"Yes," said Goethe; "Lessing himself said, that if God would give him truth, he would decline the gift, and prefer the labour of seeking it for himself."—*Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life.* [*Translated by Margaret Fuller.*]

EDMUND BURKE. 1729—1797.

He who calls in the aid of an equal understanding, doubles his own; and he who profits by a superior understanding, raises his power to a level with the height of the superior understanding he unites with.

Whatever turns the soul inward on itself, tends to concentre its forces, and to fit it for greater and stronger flights

JOHN MOORE. 1730—1802.

It can hardly be conceived how life, short as it is, can be passed without many intervals of tedium, by those who have not their bread to earn, if they could not call in the assistance of our worthy mute friends, the Books. Horses, hounds, the theatres, cards, and the bottle, are all of use occasionally, no doubt; but the weather may forbid the two first; a kind of nonsense may drive us from the third; the association of others is necessary for the fourth, and also for the fifth, unless to those who are already sunk into the lowest state of wretchedness and degradation: but the entertainment which BOOKS afford, can be enjoyed in the worst weather, can be varied as we please, obtained in solitude, and instead of blunting, it sharpens the understanding; but the most valuable effect of a taste for reading is, that it often preserves us from bad company. For those are not apt to go or remain with disagreeable people abroad, who are always certain of a pleasant party at home.—*Zeluco; Various Views of Human Nature, &c.*

WILLIAM COWPER. 1731—1800.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

. . . . . .

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world. To see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls in soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
Thus sitting and surveying them at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.

. . . . . .

Oh Winter ! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet-like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age ; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way ;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st
And dreaded as thou art. . . .
I crown thee King of intimate delight,
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.

. . . . . .

Come, evening, once again, season of peace,
Return, sweet evening, and continue long!

. . . . . .

Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift.

And whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil,
. . . . . .
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
. . . . . .
How calm is my recess! and how the frost
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within.
The Task, Book iv., *The Winter Evening.*

Books are not seldom talismans and spells.
The Task, Book vi., *The Winter Walk at Noon.*

EDWARD GIBBON. 1737—1794.

A taste for books is the pleasure and glory of my life. . . . I would not exchange it for the wealth of the Indies. . . . The miseries of a vacant life are never known to a man whose hours are insufficient for the inexhaustible pleasures of study. . . . The love of study, a passion which derives great vigour from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual round of independent and rational pleasure. —*Autobiography.*

Let us read with method, and propose to ourselves an end to what our studies may point. The use of reading is to aid us in thinking.

SIR WILLIAM JONES. 1746—1794.

I have carefully and regularly perused the Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that they contain more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written.

DANIEL WYTTENBACH. 1746—1820.

There is no business, no avocation whatever, which will not permit a man, who has the inclination, to give a little time, every day, to study.

COUNTESS DE GENLIS. 1746—1830.

Books are a guide in youth, and an entertainment for age. They support us under solitude, and keep us from becoming a burden to ourselves. They help us to forget the crossness of men and things, compose our cares and our passions, and lay our disappointments asleep. When we are weary of the living, we may repair to the dead, who have nothing of peevishness, pride, or design in their conversation. It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds; and these invaluable communications are within the reach of all.—*Memoires, &c.*

JOHN AIKIN. 1747—1822.

At the head of all the pleasures which offer themselves to the man of liberal education, may confidently be placed that derived from *books.* In variety, durability, and facility of attainment, no other can stand in competition with it; and even in intensity it is inferior to few. Imagine that we had it in our power to call up the shades of the greatest and wisest men that ever existed, and oblige them to converse with us on the most interesting topics—what an inestimable privilege should we think it!—how superior to all common enjoyments! But in a well-furnished library we, in fact, possess this power. We can question Xenophon and Cæsar on their campaigns, make Demosthenes and Cicero plead before us, join in the audiences of Socrates and Plato, and receive demonstrations from Euclid and Newton. In books we have the choicest thoughts of the ablest men in their best dress. We can at pleasure exclude dulness and impertinence, and open our doors to wit and good sense alone. It is needless to repeat the high commendations that have been bestowed on the study of letters by persons, who had free access to every other source of gratification. Instead of quoting Cicero to you, I shall in plain terms give you the result of my own experience on this subject. If domestic enjoyments have contributed in the first degree to the happiness of my life (and I should be ungrateful not to acknowledge that they have), the pleasures of reading have beyond all question held the second place. Without books I have never been able to pass a single day to my entire satisfaction: with them, no day has been so dark as not to have its pleasure. Even pain and sickness have for a time been charmed away by them. By the easy provision of a book in my pocket, I have frequently worn through long nights and days in the most disagreeable parts of my profession, with all the difference in my feelings between calm content and fretful impatience. Such occurrences have afforded me full proof both of the possibility of being cheaply pleased, and of the consequence it is of to the sum of human felicity, not to neglect minute attentions to make the most of life as it passes.

Reading may in every sense be called a *cheap* amusement. A *taste for books*, indeed, may be made expensive enough; but that is a taste for editions, bindings, paper, and type. If you are satisfied with getting at the sense as an author, in some commodious way, a crown at a stall will supply your wants as well as a guinea at a shop. Learn, too, to distinguish between books to be *perused*, and books to be *possessed*. Of the former you may find an ample store in every subscription library, the proper use of which to a scholar is to furnish his mind without loading his shelves. No apparatus, no appointment of time and place, is necessary for the enjoyment of reading. From the midst of bustle and business you may, in an instant, by the magic of a book, plunge into scenes of remote ages and countries, and disengage yourself from present care and fatigue. "Sweet pliability of man's spirit, (cries Sterne, on relating an occurrence of this kind in his Sentimental Journey) that can at once surrender itself to illusions which cheat expectation and sorrow of their weary moments!"—*Letters from a Father to his Son.*

JOHN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE.

1749—1832.

No productiveness of the highest kind, no remarkable discovery, no great thought which bears fruit and has results, is in the power of any one; but such things are elevated above all earthly control. Man must consider them as an unexpected gift from above, as pure children of God, which he must receive and venerate with joyful thanks. They are akin to the dæmon, which does with him what it pleases, and to which he unconsciously resigns himself, whilst he believes he is acting from his own impulse. In such cases, man may often be considered as an instrument in a higher government of the world,—as a vessel found worthy for the reception of a divine influence. I say this, whilst I consider how often a single thought has given a different form to whole centuries, and how individual men have, by their expressions, imprinted a stamp upon their age, which has remained uneffaced, and has operated beneficially upon succeeding generations.—*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret.* [*Translated by John Oxenford.*]

There are three classes of readers; some enjoy without judgment; others judge without enjoyment; and some there are who judge while they enjoy, and enjoy while they judge.

Whoever would do good in the world, ought not to deal in censure. We ought not to destroy, but rather construct.

It is a peculiarity of the literary world, that nothing in it is ever destroyed without a new production, and one of the same kind too. There is in it an eternal life, for it is always in its old age, in its manhood, youth, and childhood, and all this at one and the same time.

Certain books are written, not to instruct you, but to let you know that the author knew something.

Our most valuable acquisition from history is the enthusiasm it excites.

To understand an author we must first understand his age.

Whatever you cannot understand, you cannot possess.

Generally speaking, an author's style is a faithful copy of his mind. If you would write a lucid style, let there first be light in your own mind.

I have never made a secret of my enmity to parodies and travesties. My only reason for hating them is because they lower the beautiful, noble, and great.*

Every week he (Schiller) was different and more perfect; whenever I saw him he appeared to me to have advanced in reading, learning, and judgment.

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* One of the papers (that entitled "Debasing the Moral Currency") in "The Impressions of Theophrastus Such" expresses a strongly marked characteristic of George Eliot's mind. It is a pithy protest against the tendency of the present generation to turn the grandest deeds and noblest works of art into food for laughter. For she hated nothing so much as mockery and ridicule of what other people reverenced, often remarking that those who considered themselves freest from superstitious fancies were the most intolerant. She carried this feeling to such a pitch that she even disliked a book like "Alice in Wonderland," because it laughed at the things which children had had a kind of belief in. In censuring this vicious habit of burlesquing the things that ought to be regarded with awe and admiration, she remarks, "Let a greedy buffoonery debase all historic beauty, majesty and pathos, and the more you heap up the desecrated symbols, the greater will be the lack of the ennobling emotions which subdue the tyranny of suffering, and make ambition one with virtue."—*George Eliot: by Mathilde Blind. (Eminent Women Series.)*

Look at Burns! What makes him great, but the circumstance that the old songs of his ancestors still lived in the mouth of the people, that they were sung at his cradle, that he heard them and grew up with them in his boyhood, until their high perfection became part and parcel of himself, and until they became for him a living basis on which he could stand and take his start. And again, what makes him great, but the echo which his songs found in the hearts of his countrymen! They came back to him from the field where the labourers sang them, and from the inn, where merry fellows greeted his ear with his own songs.—*Goethe's Opinions; from his Correspondence and Conversations; by Otto Wenckstern.*

In the whirlpool of the literature of the day, I have been dragged into the bottomless abyss of horrors of the recent French romance-literature. I will say in one word—*it is a literature of despair.* In order to produce a momentary effect, the very contrary of all that should be held up to man for his safety or his comfort is brought before the reader, who at last knows not whether to fly or how to save himself. To push the hideous, the revolting, the cruel, the base, in short the whole brood of the vile and abandoned, to impossibility, in their Satanic task. One may, and must, say *task;* for there is at the bottom a profound study of old times, by-gone events and circumstances, remarkable and intricate plots, and incredible facts; so that it is impossible to call such a work either empty or bad. And this task even men of remarkable talents have undertaken; clever, eminent men, men of middle age, who feel themselves damned henceforward to occupy themselves with these abominations. . . . Everything true—everything æsthetical is gradually and necessarily excluded from this literature.—*Goethe's Correspondence with Zelter.*

J. G. VON HERDER. 1744—1803.

With the greatest possible solicitude avoid authorship. Too early or immoderately employed, it makes the head waste and the heart empty; even were there no other worse consequences. A person, who reads only to print, in all probability reads amiss; and he, who sends away through the pen and the press every thought, the moment it occurs to him, will in a short time have sent all away, and will become a mere journeyman of the printing-office, a *compositor.*

To the above passage, quoted in the "Biographia Literaria," Coleridge appends the following note:—

To which I may add from myself, that what medical physiologists affirm of certain secretions applies equally to our thoughts; they too must be taken up again into the circulation, and be again and again re-secreted in order to ensure a healthful vigour, both to the mind and to its intellectual offspring.

RICHARD CECIL. 1748—1816.

God has given us four books: the book of grace, the book of nature, the book of the world, and the book of providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books: it does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them.

TOMAS DE YRIARTE. 1750—1791.

For every man of real learning
  Is anxious to increase his lore,
And feels, in fact, a greater yearning,
  The more he knows, to know the more.

ELIZABETH INCHBALD. 1753—1821.

Here, in the country, my books are my sole occupation; books my sure solace, and refuge from frivolous cares. Books are the calmers as well as the instructors of the mind.—*Letters.*

WILLIAM ROSCOE. 1753—1831.

To my Books on Parting with Them.

As one who, destined from his friends to part,
Regrets his loss, yet hopes again erewhile
To share their converse and enjoy their smile,
And tempers as he may affliction's dart,—
Thus, loved associates! chiefs of elder Art!
Teachers of wisdom! who could once beguile
My tedious hours, and lighten every toil,
I now resign you: nor with fainting heart;
For pass a few short years, or days, or hours,
And happier seasons may their dawn unfold,
And all your sacred fellowship restore;
When, freed from earth, unlimited its powers,
Mind shall with mind direct communion hold,
And kindred spirits meet to part no more.

GEORGE CRABBE. 1754—1832.

But what strange art, what magic can dispose
The troubled mind to change its native woes?
Or lead us willing from ourselves, to see
Others more wretched, more undone than we?
This, BOOKS can do;—nor this alone; they give
New views to life, and teach us how to live;
They soothe the grieved, the stubborn they chastise,
Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise:
Their aid they yield to all: they never shun
The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone:
Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd;
Nor tell to various people various things,
But show to subjects, what they show to kings.
Come, Child of Care! to make thy soul serene,
Approach the treasures of this tranquil scene;
Survey the dome, and, as the doors unfold,
The soul's best cure, in all her cares, behold!
Where mental wealth the poor in thought may find
And mental physic the diseased in mind;
See here the balms that passion's wounds assuage;
See coolers here, that damp the fire of rage;
Here alt'ratives, by slow degrees control
The chronic habits of the sickly soul;
And round the heart and o'er the aching head,
Mild opiates here their sober influence shed.
Now bid thy soul man's busy scenes exclude,
And view composed this silent multitude:—
Silent they are—but, though deprived of sound,
Here all the living languages abound;

Here all that live no more ; preserved they lie,
In tombs that open to the curious eye.
  Blest be the gracious Power, who taught mankind
To stamp a lasting image of the mind !
Beasts may convey, and tuneful birds may sing,
Their mutual feelings, in the opening spring ;
But Man alone has skill and power to send
The heart's warm dictates to the distant friend ;
'Tis his alone to please, instruct, advise
Ages remote, and nations yet to rise.

. . . . . .

Here come the grieved, a change of thought to find ;
The curious here to feed a craving mind ;
Here the devout their peaceful temple choose ;
And here the poet meets his favouring muse.
  With awe, around these silent walks I tread ;
These are the lasting mansions of the dead :—
"The dead !" methinks a thousand tongues reply ;
"These are the tombs of such as cannot die !
"Crown'd with eternal fame, they sit sublime,
"And laugh at all the little strife of time."

The Library. 1781.

WILLIAM GODWIN. 1756—1836.

Books are the depositary of everything that is most honourable to man. Literature, taken in all its bearings, forms the grand line of demarcation between the human and the animal kingdoms. He that loves reading, has everything within his reach. He has but to desire ; and he may possess himself of every species of wisdom to judge, and power to perform. . . . Books gratify and excite our curiosity in innumerable ways. They force us to reflect. They hurry us from point to point. They present direct ideas of various kinds, and they suggest indirect ones. In a well-written book we are presented with the maturest reflections, or the happiest flights, of a mind of uncommon excellence. It is impossible that we can be much accustomed to such companions, without attaining some resemblance of them. When I read Thomson, I become Thomson; when I read Milton, I become Milton. I find myself a sort of intellectual cameleon, assuming the colour of the substances on which I rest. He that revels in a well-chosen library, has innumerable dishes, and all of admirable flavour. His taste is rendered so acute, as easily to distinguish the nicest shades of difference. His mind becomes ductile, susceptible to every impression, and gaining new refinement from them all. His varieties of thinking baffle calculation, and his powers, whether of reason or fancy, become eminently vigorous.—*The Enquirer: Of an Early Taste for Reading.*

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER. 1759—1805.

There is no more implacable enemy, no more envious colleague, no more zealous inquisitor, than the man who has set his talents and knowledge to sale. . . . Not in the deep and hidden treasures of his own thoughts does such an one seek his reward; he seeks it in external applause, in titles and posts of honour or authority. . . . In vain has he searched for truth, if he cannot barter her in exchange for gold, for newspaper applause, for court favour.

. . . . . .

How far different is the philosophical spirit! Just as sedulously as the trader in knowledge severs his own peculiar science from all others, does the lover of wisdom strive to extend its dominion and restore its connexion with them. I say, *to restore;* for the boundaries which divide the sciences are but the work of abstraction. What the empiric separates, the philosopher unites. He has early come to the conviction that in the territory of intellect, as in the world of matter, every thing is enlinked and commingled, and his eager longing for universal harmony and agreement cannot be satisfied by fragments. All his efforts are directed to the perfecting of his knowledge; his noble impatience cannot be tranquillized till all his conceptions have arranged themselves into one harmonious whole; till he stands at the central point of arts and sciences, and thence overlooks the whole extent of their dominion with satisfied glance. New discoveries in the field of his activity, which depress the trader in science, enrapture the philosopher. . . . The philosophical mind passes on through new forms of thought, constantly heightening in beauty, to perfect, consummate excellence; while the empiric hoards the barren sameness of his school attainments in a mind eternally stationary. . . . Whatever one conquers in the empire of truth, the philosopher shares with all; while the man whose only estimate of wisdom is profit, hates his contemporaries and grudges them the light and sun which illumine them; he guards with jealous care the tottering barriers which feebly defend him from the incursions of victorious truth; for whatever he undertakes, he is compelled to borrow stimulus and encouragement from without, while the philosophical spirit finds in its objects, nay, even in its toils, excitement and reward.—*Lecture on Universal History, at Jena*, 1789.

William Cobbett. 1762—1835.

When only eleven years old, with three pence in my pocket—my whole fortune—I perceived, at Richmond, in a bookseller's window, a little book, marked "Price Three pence"—Swift's "Tale of a Tub." Its odd title excited my curiosity; I bought it in place of my supper. So impatient was I to examine it, that I got over into a field at the upper corner of Kew Gardens, and sat down to read, on the shady side of a hay-stack. The book was so different from anything I had read before—it was something so new to my mind, that, though I could not at all understand some parts of it, still it delighted me beyond measure, and produced, what I have always considered, a sort of birth of intellect. I read on till it was dark, without any thought of supper or bed. When I could see no longer, I put it into my pocket, and fell asleep beside the stack, till the birds awaked me in the morning; and then I started off, still reading my little book. I could relish nothing beside; I carried it about with me wherever I went, till, when about twenty years old, I lost it in a box that fell overboard in the Bay of Fundy.

I hope that your tastes will keep you aloof from the writings of those detestable villains, who employ the powers of their mind in debauching the minds of others, or in endeavours to do it. They present their poison in such captivating forms, that it requires great virtue and resolution to withstand their temptations; and they have, perhaps, done a thousand times as much mischief in the world as all the infidels and atheists put together. These men ought to be held in universal abhorrence, and never spoken of but with execration.

If you wish to remember a thing well, put it into writing, even if you burn the paper immediately after you have done; for the eye greatly assists the mind. Memory consists of a concatenation of ideas, the place, the time, and other circumstances, lead to the recollection of facts; and no circumstance more effectually than stating the facts upon paper. A JOURNAL should be kept by every young man. Put down something against every day in the year, if it be merely a description of the weather. You will not have done this for one year without finding the benefit of it. It demands not more than a minute in the twenty-four hours; and that minute is most agreeably and advantageously employed. It tends greatly to produce regularity in the conducting of affairs; it is a thing demanding a small portion of attention *once only in every day.—Advice to Young Men, and (incidentally) to Young Women, in the Middle and Higher Ranks of Life, in a Series of Letters addressed to a Youth, a Bachelor, a Lover, a Husband, a Father, a Citizen or a Subject.*

SIR S. EGERTON BRYDGES. 1762—1837.

Are books, in truth, a dead letter? To those who have no bright mirror in their own bosoms to reflect their images, they are! but the lively and active scenes, which they call forth in well-framed minds, exceed the liveliness of reality. Heads and hearts of a coarser grain require the substance of material objects to put them in motion. Books instruct us calmly, and without intermingling with their instruction any of those painful impressions of superiority, which we must necessarily feel from a living instructor. They wait the pace of each man's capacity; stay for his want of perception, without reproach; go backward and forward with him at his wish; and furnish inexhaustible repetitions. How is it possible to express what we owe, as intellectual beings, to the art of printing? When a man sits in a well-furnished library, surrounded by the collected wisdom of thousands of the best endowed minds, of various ages and countries, what an amazing extent of mental range does he command. Every age, and every language, has some advantages, some excellencies peculiar to itself! I am not sure, that skill in a variety of tongues is always wisdom; but an acquaintance with various forms of expression, and the operations and results of minds at various times, and under various circumstances of climate, manners and government, must necessarily enrich and strengthen our opinions. A person, who is only conversant with the literature of his own country, and that during only the last ten or twenty years, contracts so narrow a taste, that every other form of phrase, or mode of composition, every other fashion of sentiment, or intellectual process, appears to him repulsive, dull and worthless. He reads Spenser, and Milton, if he reads them at all, only as a task; and he turns with disgust from the eloquence of Sydney, Hooker, and Jeremy Taylor. . . .

Above all, there is this value in books, that they enable us to converse with the dead. There is something in this beyond the mere intrinsic worth of what they have left us. When a person's body is mouldering, cold and insensible, in the grave, we feel a sacred sentiment of veneration for the living memorials of his mind.—*The Ruminator*, No. 22, *Books.*

The contempt of many of the innocent trifles of life, which the generality of the world betray, arises from the weakness and narrowness, and not from the superiority, of their understandings. Most of the empty baubles, which mankind pursue as objects of high consideration, are suffered to eclipse those simple amusements which are in no respect less important, and which are so far more valuable as they are more compatible with purity of heart and conduct! It is from an undue estimate of the points of ordinary ambition, that health, liberty, carelessness of mind, and ease of conscience are sacrificed to the attainment of distinctions, which in the opinion of the truly wise are mere vanity. A just appreciation on the contrary will deem every pursuit, that affords amusement without derogating from virtue, praiseworthy. Of all the human relaxations which are free from guilt, perhaps there is none so dignified as reading. It is no little good to while away the tediousness of existence in a gentle and harmless exercise of the intellectual faculties. If we build castles in the air that vanish as quickly as the passing clouds, still some beneficial result has been obtained; some hours of weariness have been stolen from us; and probably some cares have been robbed of their sting. I do not here mean to discuss the scale of excellence among the various studies that books afford. It is my purpose to shew that even the most trifling books, which give harmless pleasure, produce a good far exceeding what the world ascribes to more high-sounding occupations. When we recollect of how many it is the lot, even against choice, to pass their days in solitude, how admirable is the substitute for conversation, which the powers of genius and art of printing bestow!—*The Ruminator*, No. 24, *On the Pleasures of Reading*.

JEAN PAUL F. RICHTER. 1763—1825.

A scholar has no ennui. . . . In this bridal-chamber of the mind (such are our study-chambers), in this concert-hall of the finest voices gathered from all times and places—the æsthetic and philosophic enjoyments almost overpower the faculty of choice.—*Hesperus*.

And now the most beautiful dawn that mortal can behold, arose upon his spirit—the dawn of a new composition. For the book that a person is beginning to create or design, contains within itself half a life, and God only knows what an expanse of futurity also. Hopes of improvement—ideas which are to ensure the development and enlightenment of the human race—swarm with a joyful vitality in his brain, as he softly paces up and down in the twilight when it has become too dark to write.

DR. JOHN FERRIAR. 1764—1815.

Like Poets, born, in vain Collectors strive
To cross their Fate, and learn the art to thrive.
Like CACUS, bent to tame their struggling will,
The tyrant-passion drags them backward still:
Ev'n I, debarr'd of ease, and studious hours,
Confess, mid' anxious toil, its lurking pow'rs.
How pure the joy, when first my hands unfold
The small, rare volume, black with tarnish'd gold.
The Bibliomania.

ISAAC DISRAELI. 1767—1848.

Golden volumes! richest treasures!
Objects of delicious pleasures!
You my eyes rejoicing please,
You my hands in rapture seize!
Brilliant wits, and musing sages,
Lights who beamed through many ages,
Left to your conscious leaves their story,
And dared to trust you with their glory;
And now their hope of fame achieved!
Dear volumes! you have not deceived!
Imitated from Rantzau, the founder of
the Library at Copenhagen.

Men of letters find in books an occupation congenial to their sentiments; labour without fatigue; repose with activity; an employment, interrupted without inconvenience, and exhaustless without satiety. They remain ever attached to their studies. Their library and their chamber are contiguous; and often in this contracted space, does the opulent owner consume his delicious hours.—His pursuits are ever changing, and he enlivens the austere by the lighter studies. It was said of a great hunter, that he did not live, but hunted; and it may be said of the man of letters, that he does not live, but meditates. He is that happy man who creates hourly wants, and enjoys the voluptuousness of immediate gratification. . . .

Those who feel with enthusiasm the eloquence of a fine writer, insensibly receive some particles from it; a virtuous writer communicates virtue; a refined writer, a subtile delicacy; a sublime writer, an elevation of sentiment. All these characters of the mind, in a few years, are diffused throughout the nation. Among us, what acute reasoners has the refined penetration of Hume formed; what amenity of manners has not Addison introduced; to how many virtuous youths have not the moral essays of Johnson imparted fortitude, and illumined with reflection? . . .

It is curious to observe the solitary man of letters in the concealment of his obscure study, separated from the crowd, unknown to his contemporaries, collecting the materials of instruction from every age and every country; combining with the present the example of the past, and the prediction of the future; pouring forth the valuable secrets of his meditations to posterity; striking with the concussion of new light the public mind; and forming the manners, the opinions, the refinement, and the morals of his fellow-citizens. . . .

The interruptions of visitors have been feelingly lamented by men of letters.—The mind, occupied in maturing its speculations, feels the approach of the visitor by profession, as the sudden gales of an eastern blast, passing over the blossoms of spring. "We are afraid," said some of the visitors to Baxter, "that we break in upon your time." "To be sure you do," replied the disturbed and blunt scholar. . . . The amiable Melancthon, incapable of a harsh expression, when he received these idle visits, only noted down the time he had expended, that he might reanimate his industry, and not lose a day.

Yet let us not confound true PHILOSOPHERS with dreaming THEORISTS. They are not more engaged in cultivating the mind, than the earth; the annals of agriculture are as valuable as the annals of history; and while they instruct some to think, they teach others to labour. PHILOSOPHY extends it's thoughts on whatever the eye has seen, or the hand has touched; it herbalises in fields; it founds mines; it is on the waters, and in the forests; it is in the library, and the laboratory; it arranges the calculations of finance; it invents the police of a city; it erects it's fortifications; it gives velocity to our fleets; in a word, it is alike in the solitude of deserts, as in the populousness of manufactories. The GENIUS of PHILOSOPHY pierces every where, and on whatever it rests, like the sun, it discovers what lay concealed, or matures what it found imperfect.—*An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character.* 1795.

Those authors who appear sometimes to forget they are writers, and remember they are men, will be our favourites. He who writes from the heart, will write to the heart; every one is enabled to decide on his merits, and they will not be referred to learned heads, or a distant day. We are I think little interested if an author displays sublimity; but we should be much concerned to know whether he has sincerity. . . . "Why," says Boileau, "are my verses read by all? it is only because they speak truths, and that I am convinced of the truths I write."

Why is Addison still the first of our essayists? he has sometimes been excelled in criticisms more philosophical, in topics more interesting, and in diction more coloured. But there is a personal charm in the character he has assumed, in his periodical Miscellanies, which is felt with such a gentle force, that we scarce advert to it. He has painted forth his little humours, his individual feelings, and eternised himself to his readers. . . . Sterne perhaps derives a portion of his celebrity from the same influence; he interests us in his minutest motions, for he tells us all he feels.—Richardson was sensible of the power with which his minute strokes of description enter the heart, and which are so many fastenings to which the imagination clings. He says "If I give speeches and conversations I ought to give them justly; for the humours and characters of persons cannot be known, unless I repeat *what* they say, and their *manner* of saying." I confess I am infinitely pleased when Sir William Temple acquaints us with the size of his orange trees, and with the flavour of his peaches and grapes, confessed by Frenchmen to equal those of France; with his having had the honour to naturalize in this country four kinds of grapes, with his liberal distribution of them because "he ever thought all things of this kind the commoner they are the better." In a word with his passionate attachment to his garden, of his desire to escape from great employments, and having passed five years without going to town, where, by the way, "he had a large house always ready to receive him." Dryden has interspersed many of these little particulars in his prosaic compositions, and I think, that his character and dispositions, may be more correctly acquired by uniting these scattered notices, than by any biographical account which can now be given of this man of genius. . . . Dryden confesses that he never read anything but for his pleasure. . . . Montaigne's works have been called by a Cardinal "the Breviary of Idlers." It is therefore the book of man; for all men are idlers; we have hours which we pass with lamentation, and which we know are always returning. At those moments miscellanists are comformable to all our humours. We dart along their airy and concise page, and their lively anecdote, or their profound observation are so many interstitial pleasures in our listless hours.

We find, in these literary miniatures, qualities incompatible with more voluminous performances. Sometimes a bolder, and sometimes a firmer touch; for they are allowed but a few strokes. They are permitted every kind of ornament, for how can the diminutive please, unless it charms by it's finished decorations, it's elaborate niceties, and it's exquisite polish? A concise work preserves a common subject from insipidity, and an uncommon one from error. An essayist expresses himself with a more real enthusiasm, than the writer of a volume; for I have observed that the most fervid genius is apt to cool in a quarto. . . .

The ancients were great admirers of Miscellanies; and this with some profound students, who affect to contemn these light and beautiful compositions, might be a solid argument to evince their bad taste. Aulus Gellius has preserved a copious list of titles of such works. These titles are so numerous, and include such gay and pleasing descriptions, that we may infer by their number that they were greatly admired by the public, and by their titles that they prove the great delight their authors experienced in their composition. Among the titles are "a basket of flowers;" "an embroidered mantle;" and "a variegated meadow." Such a miscellanist as was the admirable Erasmus, deserves the happy description which Plutarch with an elegant enthusiasm bestows on Menander: he calls him the delight of philosophers fatigued with study; that they have recourse to his works as to a meadow enamelled with flowers, where the sense is delighted by a purer air.

Nature herself is most delightful in her miscellaneous scenes. When I hold a volume of Miscellanies, and run over with avidity the titles of its contents, my mind is enchanted, as if it were placed among the landscapes of Valais, which Rousseau has described with such picturesque beauty. I fancy myself seated in a cottage amid those mountains, those valleys, those rocks, encircled by the enchantments of optical illusion. I look, and behold at once the united seasons. "All climates in one place, all seasons in one instant." I gaze at once on a hundred rainbows, and trace the romantic figures of the shifting clouds. I seem to be in a temple dedicated to the service of the Goddess VARIETY.

On the other side, readers must not imagine that all the pleasures of composition depend on the author; for there is something which a reader himself must bring to the book, that the book may please. There is a literary appetite which the author can no more impart, than the most skilful cook can give an appetency to the guests. When Cardinal Richelieu said to Godeau, that he did not understand his verses, the honest poet replied, that it was not his fault. It would indeed be very unreasonable, when a painter exhibits his pictures in public, to expect that he should provide spectacles for the use of the short-sighted. Every man must come prepared as well as he can. Simonides confessed himself incapable of deceiving stupid persons; and Balzac remarked of the girls of his village, that they were too silly to be duped by a man of wit. Dullness is impenetrable; and there are hours when the liveliest taste loses its sensibility. The temporary tone of the mind may be unfavourable to taste a work properly, and we have had many erroneous criticisms from great men, which may often be attributed to this circumstance. The mind communicates it's infirm dispositions to the book, and an author has not only his own defects to account for, but also those of his reader. There is something in composition, like the game of shuttlecock, where, if the reader does not quickly rebound the feathered cork to the author, the game is destroyed, and the whole spirit of the work falls extinct.—*Literary Miscellanies: including a Dissertation on Anecdotes. A New Edition, enlarged.* 1801.

JOHN FOSTER. 1770—1843.

The man who is supposed to be thoughtfully passing his eye over a large array of books . . . may be arrested by the works of some authors of highest distinction, splendid in literary achievement and lasting fame. While pronouncing their names and looking at these volumes, in which they have left a representative existence on earth, left the form and action of their minds embodied in a more durable vehicle than their once animated clay, how striking to think, that somewhere, and in some certain condition, they themselves are existing still—existing as really and personally as when they were revolving the thoughts and writing the sentences which fill these books! . . . The musing of our contemplatist may at times be led to solemn conjectures at the award which these great intellectual performers have found in another state; and he follows some of them with a very dark surmise. . . . And he may be reminded of that sovereignty of the Governor of the world in his selection and appointment, by which minds greatly below the highest order of natural ability may be rendered pre-eminent in usefulness. It may also occur to him, diverting for an instant from all the ranks and varieties of those who have aspired to be teachers of mankind, to reflect how many humble spirits, that never attempted any of the thousand speculations, nor revelled in the literary luxuries contained in these books, have nevertheless passed worthily and happily through the world into a region where it *may* be the appointed result and reward of fervent piety, in inferior faculties, to overtake, by one mighty bound, the intellectual magnitude of those who had previously been much more powerful minds. . . .

The mind of a thoughtful looker over a range of volumes, of many dates, and a considerable portion of them old, will sometimes be led into a train of conjectural questions:—Who were they, that, in various times and places, have had these in their possession? Perhaps many hands have turned over the leaves, many eyes have passed along the lines. With what measure of intelligence, and of approval or dissent, did those persons respectively follow the train of thoughts? How many of them were honestly intent on becoming wise by what they read! How many sincere prayers were addressed by them to the Eternal Wisdom during the perusal? How many have been determined, in their judgment or their actions, by these books? . . . May not some one of these books be the last that some one person lived to read? Many that have perused them are dead; each made an exit in a manner and with circumstances of its own; what were the manner and circumstances in each instance? It was a most solemn event to that person; but how ignorant concerning it am I, who now perhaps have my eye on the book which he read the last! What a power of association, what an element of intense significance, would invest some of these volumes, if I could have a momentary vision of the last scene of a number of the most remarkable of their former readers! Of that the books can tell me nothing; but let me endeavour to bring the fact, that persons have read them and died, to bear with a salutary influence on my own mind while I am reading any of them. Let me cherish that temper of spirit which is sensible of intimations of what is departed, remaining and mingling with what is present, and can thus perceive some monitory glimpses of even the unknown dead. What multiplied traces of them on some of these books are perceptible to the imagination, which beholds successive countenances long since "changed and sent away," bent in attention over the pages! And the minds which looked from within through those countenances, conversing with the thoughts of other minds perhaps long withdrawn, even at that time, from among men—what and where are they now?

Sometimes the conjectural reference to the former possessors and readers of books seems to be rendered a little less vague, by our finding at the beginning of an old volume one or more names written, in such characters, and perhaps accompanied with such dates, that we are assured those persons must long since have done with all books. The name is generally all we can know of him who inserted it; but we can thus fix on an individual as actually having possessed this volume; and perhaps there are here and there certain marks which should indicate an attentive perusal. What manner of person was he? What did he think of the sentiments, the passages which I see that he particularly noticed? If there be opinions here which I cannot admit, did he believe them? If there be counsels here which I deem most just and important, did they effectually persuade him? . . . The book is perhaps such a one as he could not read without being cogently admonished that he was going to his great account. He went to that account—how did he meet and pass through it? This is no vain revery. He, the man who bore and wrote this name, *did* go, at a particular time, though unrecorded, to surrender himself to his Judge. But I, who handle the book that was his, and observe his name, and am thus directing my thoughts into the dark after the *man*, I also am in progress toward the same tribunal, when it will be proved to my joy or sorrow, whether I have learned true wisdom from my books, and from my reflections on those who have possessed and read them before.

But it may be that the observer's eye fixes on a volume which instantly recalls to his mind a person whom he well knew—a revered parent perhaps, or a valued friend, who is recollected to have approved and inculcated the principles of the book, or perhaps to have given it to the person who is now looking at it as a token of regard, or an inoffensive expedient for drawing attention to an important subject. He may have the image of that relative or friend, as in the employment of reading that volume, or in the act of presenting it to him. This may awaken a train of remembrances leading away from any relation to the book, and possibly of salutary tendency; but also, such an association with the book may have an effect, whenever he shall consult it, as if it were the departed friend, still more than the author, that uttered the sentiments. The author spoke to any one indifferently—to no one in particular; but the sentiments seem to be especially applied to *me*, when they come in this connection with the memory of one who was my friend.

Thus he would have spoken to me; thus in effect he does speak to me, while I think of him as having read the book, and regarded it as particularly adapted to me; or seem to behold him, as when reading it in my hearing, and sometimes looking off from the page to make a gentle enforcement of the instruction. He would have been happy to anticipate, that, whenever I might look into it, my remembrance of him would infuse a more touching significance, a more applying principle, into its important sentiments; thus retaining him, though invisibly, and without his actual presence, in the exercise of a beneficent influence. But indeed I can, at some moments, indulge my mind to imagine something more than this mere ideal intervention to reinforce the impression of truth upon me, insomuch that, supposing it were permitted to receive intimations from those who have left the world, it will seem to me possible that I might, when looking into some parts of that book, in a solitary hour of night, perceive myself to be once more the object of his attention, signified by a mysterious whisper from no visible form; or by a momentary preternatural luminousness pervading the lines, to intimate that a friendly intelligence that does not forget me, would still and again enforce on my conscience the dictates of piety and wisdom which I am reading. . . . Is all influential relation dissolved by the withdrawment from mortal intercourse; so that let my friends die, and I am as loose from their hold upon me as if they had ceased to exist, or even never had existed?—*Introductory Essay to Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. 1770—1850.

Wings have we, and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low,
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store;
Matter wherein right voluble I am:
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear—
The gentle lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not: malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares—
The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

WALTER SCOTT. 1771—1832.

The hours of youth, my dear Walter, are too precious to be spent all in gaiety. We must lay up in that period when our spirit is active, and our memory strong, the stores of information which are not only to facilitate our progress through life, but to amuse and interest us in our later stages of existence. I very often think what an unhappy person I should have been, if I had not done something more or less towards improving my understanding when I was at your age; and I never reflect, without severe self-condemnation, on the opportunities of acquiring knowledge which I either trifled with, or altogether neglected. I hope you will be wiser than I have been, and experience less of that self-reproach.—*Lockhart's Life:* "*Letter to His Son.*"

If my learning be flimsy and inaccurate, the reader must have some compassion even for an idle workman, who had so narrow a foundation to build upon. If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages, let such a reader remember that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and reason.—*Lockhart's Life:* "*Autobiography.*"

Nothing increases by indulgence more than a desultory habit of reading.—*Waverley.*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. 1772—1834.

I would address an affectionate exhortation to the youthful *literati*, grounded on my own experience. It will be but short; for the beginning, middle, and end converge to one charge: *never pursue literature as a trade.* With the exception of one extraordinary man, I have never known an individual, least of all an individual of genius, healthy or happy without a *profession*, that is, some *regular* employment, which does not depend on the will of the moment, and which can be carried on so far *mechanically* that an average *quantum* only of health, spirits, and intellectual exertion are requisite to its faithful discharge. Three hours of leisure, unannoyed by any alien anxiety, and looked forward to with delight as a change and recreation, will suffice to realise in literature a larger product of what is truly genial, than weeks of compulsion. . . . "My dear young friend, suppose yourself established in any honourable occupation. From the manufactory or counting house, from the law-court, or from having visited your last patient, you return at evening,

Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest . . .

to your family, prepared for its social enjoyments, with the very countenances of your wife and children brightened, and their voice of welcome made doubly welcome, by the knowledge that, as far as *they* are concerned, you have satisfied the demands of the day by the labour of the day. Then, when you retire into your study, in the books on your shelves you revisit so many venerable friends with whom you can converse. Your own spirit scarcely less free from personal anxieties than the great minds, that in those books are still living for you! Even your writing desk with its blank paper and all its other implements will appear as a chain of flowers, capable of linking your feelings as well as thoughts to events and characters past or to come; not a chain of iron, which binds you down to think of the future and the remote by recalling the claims and feelings of the peremptory present. But why should I say *retire?* The habits of active life and daily intercourse with the stir of the world will tend to give you such self-command, that the presence of your family will be no interruption. Nay, the social silence, or undisturbing voices of a wife or sister will be like a restorative atmosphere, or soft music which moulds a dream without becoming its object. If facts are required to prove the possibility of combining weighty performances in literature with full and independent employment, the works of Cicero and Xenophon among the ancients; of Sir Thomas More, Bacon, Baxter, or to refer at once to later and contemporary instances, Darwin and Roscoe, are at once decisive of the question.—*Biographia Literaria, chap.* xi.

In classifying the various kinds of readers, he (Coleridge) said some were like jelly-bags—they let pass away all that is pure and good, and retained only what is impure and refuse. Another class he typified by a sponge; these were they whose minds sucked all up, and gave it back again, only a little dirtier. Others, again, he likened to an hour-glass, and their reading to the sand which runs in and runs out, and leaves no trace behind. I forget the fourth class, but the fifth and last he compared to the slave in the Golconda mines, who retained the gold and the gem, and cast aside the dust and the dross.—"*Notes and Reminiscences,*" *by the late W. H. Harrison, University Magazine, vol.* i. *p.* 537.

ROBERT SOUTHEY. 1774—1843.

My days among the Dead are pass'd;
  Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
  The mighty minds of old;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,
  And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
  How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead: with them
  I live in long-past years;
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
  Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead, anon
  My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
  Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

Young readers—you, whose hearts are open, whose understandings are not yet hardened, and whose feelings are not yet exhausted nor encrusted with the world, take from me a better rule than any professors of criticism will teach you! Would you know whether the tendency of a book is good or evil, examine in what state of mind you lay it down. Has it induced you to suspect that what you have been accustomed to think unlawful, may after all be innocent, and that may be harmless which you have hitherto been taught to think dangerous? Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and impatient under the control of others, and disposed you to relax in that self-government without which both the laws of God and man tell us there can be no virtue, and consequently no happiness? Has it attempted to abate your admiration and reverence for what is great and good, and to diminish in you the love of your country, and your fellow-creatures? Has it addressed itself to your pride, your vanity, your selfishness, or any other of your evil propensities? Has it defiled the imagination with what is loathsome, and shocked the heart with what is monstrous? Has it disturbed the sense of right and wrong which the Creator has implanted in the human soul? If so, if you are conscious of all or any of these effects, or if having escaped from all, you have felt that such were the effects it was intended to produce, throw the book in the fire, whatever name it may bear in the title-page! Throw it in the fire, young man, though it should have been the gift of a friend; young lady, away with the whole set, though it should be the prominent furniture of a rosewood bookcase.—*The Doctor*, ii. 86 (*Interchapter* v.).

"Libraries," says my good old friend George Dyer, a man as learned as he is benevolent, . . . "libraries are the wardrobes of literature, whence men, properly informed, might bring forth something for ornament, much for curiosity, and more for use." These books of mine, as you well know, are not drawn up here for display, however much the pride of the eye may be gratified in beholding them; they are on actual service. Whenever they may be dispersed, there is not one among them that will ever be more comfortably lodged, or more highly prized by its possessor; and generations may pass away before some of them will again find a reader. . . . It is well that we do not moralize too much upon such subjects, . . .

For foresight is a melancholy gift,
Which bares the bald, and speeds the all-too-swift.

But the dispersion of a library, whether in retrospect or in anticipation, is always to me a melancholy thing. How many such dispersions must have taken place to have made it possible that these books should thus be brought together here among the Cumberland mountains! Many, indeed; and in many instances most disastrous ones. Not a few of these volumes have been cast up from the wreck of the family or convent libraries during the late Revolution. . . . Yonder Acta Sanctorum belonged to the Capuchines, at Ghent. This book of St. Bridget's Revelations, in which not only all the initial letters are illuminated, but every capital throughout the volume was coloured, came from the Carmelite Nunnery at Bruges. That copy of Alain Chartier, from the Jesuits' College at Louvain; that *Imago Primi Sæculi Societatis*, from their college at Ruremond. Here are books from Colbert's library; here others from the Lamoignon one. . . . A book is the more valuable to me when I know to whom it has belonged, and through what "scenes and changes" it has past. I would have its history recorded in the fly leaf, as carefully as the pedigree of a race-horse is preserved. . . . I confess that I have much of that feeling in which the superstition concerning relics has originated; and I am sorry when I see the name of a former owner obliterated in a book, or the plate of his arms defaced. Poor memorials though they be, yet they are something saved for a while from oblivion; and I should be almost as unwilling to destroy them, as to efface the *Hic jacet* of a tombstone. There may be sometimes a pleasure in recognizing them, sometimes a salutary sadness.

How peaceably they stand together, . . . Papists and Protestants side by side! Their very dust reposes not more quietly in the cemetery. Ancient and Modern, Jew and Gentile, Mahommedan and Crusader, French and English, Spaniards and Portuguese, Dutch and Brazilians, fighting their old battles, silently now, upon the same shelf: Fernam Lopez and Pedro de Ayala; John de Laet and Barlæus, with the historians of Joam Fernandes Vieira; Fox's Martyrs and the Three Conversions of Father Persons; Cranmer and Stephen Gardiner; Dominican and Franciscan; Jesuit and *Philosophe* (equally misnamed); Churchmen and Sectarians; Roundheads and Cavaliers!

Here are God's conduits, grave divines; and here
Is nature's secretary, the philosopher:
And wily statesmen, which teach how to tie
The sinews of a city's mystic body;
Here gathering chroniclers: and by them stand
Giddy fantastic poets of each land.
Donne.

Here I possess these gathered treasures of time, the harvest of so many generations, laid up in my garners: and when I go to the window, there is the lake, and the circle of the mountains, and the illimitable sky. The simile of the bees,

Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes,

has often been applied to men who have made literature their profession; and they among them to whom worldly wealth and worldly honours are objects of ambition, may have reason enough to acknowledge its applicability. But it will bear a happier application, and with equal fitness; for, for whom is the purest honey hoarded that the bees of this world elaborate, if it be not for the man of letters? The exploits of the kings and heroes of old, serve now to fill story books for his amusement and instruction. It was to delight his leisure and call forth his admiration that Homer sung, and Alexander conquered. It is to gratify his curiosity that adventurers have traversed deserts and savage countries, and navigators have explored the seas from pole to pole. The revolutions of the planet which he inhabits are but matters for his speculation; and the deluges and conflagrations which it has undergone, problems to exercise his philosophy, . . . or fancy. He is the inheritor of whatever has been discovered by persevering labour, or created by inventive genius. The wise of all ages have heaped up a treasure for him, which rust doth not corrupt, and which thieves cannot break through and steal. . . . I must leave out the moth, . . . for even in this climate care is required against its ravages.

Never can any man's life have been passed more in accord with his own inclinations, nor more answerably to his own desires. Excepting that peace which, through God's infinite mercy, is derived from a higher source, it is to literature, humanly speaking, that I am beholden, not only for the means of subsistence, but for every blessing which I enjoy; . . . health of mind and activity of mind, contentment, cheerfulness, continual employments, and therewith continual pleasure. *Suavissima vita indies sentire se fieri meliorem;* and this, as Bacon has said, and Clarendon repeated, is the benefit that a studious man enjoys in retirement. To the studies which I have faithfully pursued, I am indebted for friends with whom, hereafter, it will be deemed an honour to have lived in friendship; and as for the enemies which they have procured to me in sufficient numbers, . . . happily I am not of the thin-skinned race, . . . they might as well fire small shot at a rhinoceros, as direct their attacks upon me. *In omnibus requiem quæsivi,* said Thomas à Kempis, *sed non inveni nisi in angulis et libellis.* I too have found repose where he did, in books and retirement, but it was there alone I sought it: to these my nature, under the direction of a merciful Providence, led me betimes, and the world can offer nothing which should tempt me from them.—*Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society. Colloquy* xiv.: "*The Library.*"

Charles Lamb. 1775—1834.

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers, that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.—*Elia's Essays: "Oxford in the Vacation."*

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your *borrowers of books*—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes. There is Comberbatch [Coleridge], matchless in his depredations!

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out—(you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, reader!)——with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventuræ*, choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre,—Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas), showed but as dwarfs,—itself an Ascapart!—*that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that "the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance), is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same." Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left-hand case—two shelves from the ceiling—scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser——was whilom the commodious resting-place of Brown on Urn Burial. C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties—but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself.—Just below, Dodsley's dramas want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam's refuse sons, when the Fates *borrowed* Hector. Here stood the Anatomy of Melancholy, in sober state.—There loitered the Complete Angler; quiet as in life, by some stream side.—In yonder nook, John Buncle, a widower-volume, with "eyes closed," mourns his ravished mate.
—*Elia's Essays: "The Two Races of Men."*

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakspeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the Fairy Queen?—*Elia's Essays: "Grace Before Meat."*

In the depth of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances.—*Elia's Essays: "Poor Relations."*

I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call a *book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of *books which are no books—biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards, bound and lettered at the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacks, Statutes at large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without:" the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost any thing. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what "seem its leaves," to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of blockheaded Encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of Russia or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably re-clothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscriminately. I would not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever) is *our* costume. A Shakspeare, or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's Seasons, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn, and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond Russia,) if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs, that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting content! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollet, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of them to be "eterne." But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

> We know not where is that Promethean torch
> That can its light relumine—

such a book, for instance, as the Life of the Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel. . . .

I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the Anatomy of Melancholy. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure? what hapless stationer could dream of Burton ever becoming popular?—The wretched Malone could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford church to let him white-wash the painted effigy of old Shakspeare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted, to the very colour of the cheek, the eye, the eyebrow, hair, the very dress he used to wear—the only authentic testimony we had, however imperfect, of these curious parts and parcels of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint. By ——, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I would have clapped both commentator and sexton fast in the stocks, for a pair of meddling sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work—these sapient trouble-tombs. . . .

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the Fairy Queen for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears.

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakspeare enters. At such a season, the Tempest, or his own Winter's Tale— . . .

Coming in to an inn at night—having ordered your supper—what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest—two or three numbers of the old Town and Country Magazine, with its amusing *tête-à-tête* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G——;" "The Melting Platonic and the old Beau,"—and such like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book? . . .

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow-hill (as yet Skinner's-street *was not*), between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner. I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot, or a bread basket, would have quickly put to flight all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.

There is a class of street-readers, whom I can never contemplate without affection—the poor gentry, who, not having wherewithal to buy or hire a book, filch a little learning at the open stalls—the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdict, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they "snatch a fearful joy." Martin B——, in this way, by daily fragments, got through two volumes of Clarissa, when the stall-keeper damped his laudable ambition, by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase the work. M. declares, that under no circumstances of his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches.—*Elia's Essays: "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.*"

[Bridget Elia *loquitur*] "I wish the good old times would come again, when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;" so she was pleased to ramble on,—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that over-worn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now."—*Elia's Essays: " Old China."*

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. 1775—1864.

O Andrew! Although our learning raiseth up against us many enemies, among the low, and more among the powerful, yet doth it invest us with grand and glorious privileges, and grant to us a largess of beatitude. We enter our studies, and enjoy a society which we alone can bring together. We raise no jealousy by conversing with one in preference to another; we give no offence to the most illustrious by questioning him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly. Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence; each interlocutor stands before us, speaks, or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. Nothing is past which we desire to be present; and we enjoy by anticipation somewhat like the power which I imagine we shall possess hereafter of sailing on a wish from world to world.—*Imaginary Conversations: "Milton in conversation with Andrew Marvell."*

Logic, however unperverted, is not for boys; argument is among the most dangerous of early practices, and sends away both fancy and modesty. The young mind should be nourished with simple and grateful food, and not too copious. It should be little exercised until its nerves and muscles show themselves, and even then rather for air than anything else. Study is the bane of boyhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restorative of age.—*Pericles and Aspasia*, lvii.: "*Cleone to Aspasia.*"

The writings of the wise are the only riches our posterity cannot squander.

WILLIAM HAZLITT. 1778—1830.

They [Books] are the nearest to our thoughts: they wind into the heart; the poet's verse slides into the current of our blood. We read them when young, we remember them when old. We read there of what has happened to others; we feel that it has happened to ourselves. They are to be had everywhere cheap and good. We breathe but the air of books: we owe every thing to their authors, on this side barbarism; and we pay them easily with contempt, while living, and with an epitaph, when dead! . . . there are neither picture-galleries nor theatres-royal on Salisbury-plain, where I write this; but here, even here, with a few old authors, I can manage to get through the summer or the winter months, without ever knowing what it is to feel *ennui*. They sit with me at breakfast; they walk out with me before dinner. After a long walk through unfrequented tracks, after starting the hare from the fern, or hearing the wing of the raven rustling above my head, or being greeted by the woodman's "stern good-night," as he strikes into his narrow homeward path, I can "take mine ease at mine inn," beside the blazing hearth, and shake hands with Signor Orlando Friscobaldo [a character in one of Dekkar's Plays], as the oldest acquaintance I have, Ben Jonson, learned Chapman, Master Webster, and Master Heywood, are there; and seated round, discourse the silent hours away. Shakespear is there himself, not in Cibber's manager's coat. Spenser is hardly yet returned from a ramble through the woods, or is concealed behind a group of nymphs, fawns, and satyrs. Milton lies on the table, as on an altar, never taken up or laid down without reverence. Lyly's Endymion sleeps with the moon, that shines in at the window; and a breath of wind stirring at a distance seems a sigh from the tree under which he grew old. Faustus disputes in one corner of the room with fiendish faces, and reasons of divine astrology. Bellafront soothes Matheo, Vittoria triumphs over her judges, and old Chapman repeats one of the hymns of Homer, in his own fine translation! I should have no objection to pass my life in this manner out of the world, not thinking of it, nor it of me; neither abused by my enemies, nor defended by my friends; careless of the future, but sometimes dreaming of the past which might as well be forgotten!—*Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.*

Actions pass away and are forgotten: conquerors, statesmen, and kings live but by their names stamped on the page of history. Hume says rightly that more people think of Virgil and Homer than ever trouble their heads about Cæsar or Alexander. In fact, poets are a longer-lived race than heroes; they breathe more of the air of immortality. We have all that Virgil or Homer did, as much as if we had lived at the same time with them. Scarcely a trace of what the others did is left upon the earth, so as to be visible to common eyes. The one, the dead authors, are living men, still breathing and moving in their writings. The others, the conquerors of the world, are but the ashes in an urn. . . . Words, ideas, feelings, with the progress of time, harden into substances; things, bodies, actions, moulder away, or melt into a sound, into thin air! . . . For not only a man's actions are effaced and vanish with him; his virtues and generous qualities die with him also; his intellect only is immortal and bequeathed unimpaired to posterity. Words are the only things that last for ever.—*Table Talk: "On Thought and Action."*

When I take up a work that I have read before (the oftener the better) I know what I have to expect.

The satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated. When the entertainment is altogether new, I sit down to it as I should to a strange dish,—turn and pick out a bit here and there, and am in doubt what to think of the composition. There is a want of confidence and security to second appetite. New-fangled books are also like made-dishes in this respect, that they are generally little else than hashes and *rifaccimenti* of what has been served up entire and in a more natural state at other times. Besides, in thus turning to a well-known author, there is not only an assurance that my time will not be thrown away, or my palate nauseated with the most insipid or vilest trash,—but I shake hands with, and look an old, tried, and valued friend in the face,—compare notes, and chat the hours away. It is true, we form dear friendships with such ideal guests —dearer, alas! and more lasting, than those with our most intimate acquaintance. In reading a book which is an old favourite with me (say the first novel I ever read) I not only have the pleasure of imagination and of a critical relish of the work, but the pleasures of memory added to it. It recalls the same feelings and associations which I had in first reading it, and which I can never have again in any other way. Standard productions of this kind are links in the chain of our conscious being. They bind together the different scattered divisions of our personal identity. They are landmarks and guides in our journey through life. They are pegs and loops on which we can hang up, or from which we can take down, at pleasure, the wardrobe of a moral imagination, the relics of our best affections, the tokens and records of our happiest hours.

They are "for thoughts and for remembrance!" They are like Fortunatus's Wishing-Cap—they give us the best riches—those of Fancy; and transport us, not over half the globe, but (which is better) over half our lives, at a word's notice!

My father Shandy solaced himself with Bruscambille. Give me for this purpose a volume of "Peregrine Pickle" or "Tom Jones." Open either of them anywhere—at the "Memoirs of Lady Vane," or the adventures at the masquerade with Lady Bellaston, or the disputes between Thwackum and Square, or the escape of Molly Seagrim, or the incident of Sophia and her muff, or the edifying prolixity of her aunt's lecture—and there I find the same delightful, busy, bustling scene as ever, and feel myself the same as when I was first introduced into the midst of it. Nay, sometimes the sight of an old volume of these good old English authors on a stall, or the name lettered on the back among others on the shelves of a library, answers the purpose, revives the whole train of ideas, and sets "the puppets dallying." Twenty years are struck off the list, and I am a child again. A sage philosopher, who was not a very wise man, said, that he should like very well to be young again, if he could take his experience along with him. This ingenious person did not seem to be aware, by the gravity of his remark, that the great advantage of being young is to be without this weight of experience, which he would fain place upon the shoulders of youth, and which never comes too late with years. Oh! what a privilege to be able to let this hump, like Christian's burthen, drop from off one's back, and transport oneself, by the help of a little musty duodecimo, to the time when "ignorance was bliss," and when we first got a peep at the raree-show of the world, through the glass of fiction—gazing at mankind, as we do at wild beasts in a menagerie, through the bars of their cages,—or at curiosities in a museum, that we must not touch! for myself, not only are the old ideas of the contents of the work brought back to my mind in all their vividness, but the old associations of the faces and persons of those I then knew, as they were in their lifetime—the place where I sat to read the volume, the day when I got it, the feeling of the air, the fields, the sky—return, and all my early impressions with them. This is better to me—those places, those times, those persons, and those feelings that come across me as I retrace the story and devour the page, are to me better far than the wet sheets of the last new novel from the Ballantyne press, to say nothing of the Minerva press in Leadenhall Street. It is like visiting the scenes of early youth. I think of the time "when I was in my father's house, and my path ran down with butter and honey,"—when I was a little, thoughtless child, and had no other wish or care but to con my daily task, and be happy!—"Tom Jones," I remember, was the first work that broke the spell. It came down in numbers once a fortnight, in Cooke's pocket-edition, embellished with cuts. I had hitherto read only in school-books, and a tiresome ecclesiastical history (with the exception of Mrs. Radcliffe's "Romance of the Forest"): but this had a different relish with it,—"sweet in the mouth," though not "bitter in the belly." It smacked of the world I lived in, and in which I was to live—and showed me groups, "gay creatures" not "of the element," but of the earth; not "living in the clouds," but travelling the same road that I did;—some that had passed on before me, and others that might soon overtake me. My heart had palpitated at the thoughts of a boarding-school ball, or gala-day, at Midsummer or Christmas; but the world I had found out in Cooke's edition of the "British Novelists" was to me a dance through life, a perpetual gala-day. The sixpenny numbers of this work regularly contrived to leave off just in the middle of a sentence, and in the nick of a story. . . . With what eagerness I used to look forward to the next number, and open the prints! Ah! never again shall I feel the enthusiastic delight with which I gazed at the figures, and anticipated the story and adventures of Major Bath and Commodore Trunnion, of Trim and my Uncle Toby, of Don Quixote and Sancho and Dapple, of Gil Blas and Dame Lorenza Sephora, of Laura and the fair Lucretia, whose lips open and shut like buds of roses. To what nameless ideas did they give rise,—with what airy delights I filled up the outlines, as I hung in silence over the page!—Let me still recall them, that they may breathe fresh life into me, and that I may live that birthday of thought and romantic pleasure over again! Talk of the *ideal!* This is the only true ideal —the heavenly tints of Fancy reflected in the bubbles that float upon the spring-tide of human life.

O Memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,
And give those scenes thine everlasting life!

The Plain Speaker: "On Reading Old Books."

I cannot understand the rage manifested by the greater part of the world for reading New Books. If the public had read all those that have gone before, I can conceive how they should not wish to read the same work twice over; but when I consider the countless volumes that lie unopened, unregarded, unread, and unthought-of, I cannot enter into the pathetic complaints that I hear made that Sir Walter writes no more—that the press is idle—that Lord Byron is dead. If I have not read a book before, it is, to all intents and purposes, new to me, whether it was printed yesterday or three hundred years ago. If it be urged that it has no modern, passing incidents, and is out of date and old-fashioned, then it is so much the newer; it is farther removed from other works that I have lately read, from the familiar routine of ordinary life, and makes so much more addition to my knowledge. But many people would as soon think of putting on old armour as of taking up a book not published within the last month, or year at the utmost. There is a fashion in reading as well as in dress, which lasts only for the season. One would imagine that books were, like women, the worse for being old; that they have a pleasure in being read for the first time; that they open their leaves more cordially; that the spirit of enjoyment wears out with the spirit of novelty; and that, after a certain age, it is high time to put them on the shelf. This conceit seems to be followed up in practice. What is it to me that another—that hundreds or thousands have in all ages read a work? Is it on this account the less likely to give me pleasure, because it has delighted so many others? Or can I taste this pleasure by proxy? Or am I in any degree the wiser for their knowledge? Yet this might appear to be the inference.—*Sketches and Essays: "On Reading New Books."*

The greatest pleasure in life is that of reading, and I have had as much of this pleasure as perhaps anyone. I have had more pleasure in reading the adventures of a novel (and perhaps changing situations with the hero) than I ever had in my own. I do not think any one can feel much happier—a greater degree of heart's ease—than I used to feel in reading *Tristram Shandy*, and *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Tom Jones*, and *The Tatler*, and *Gil Blas of Santillane*, and *Werter*, and *Boccacio.* It was some years after that I read the last, but his Tales

> Dallied with the innocence of love,
> Like the old time.

The story of *Federigo Alberigi* affected me as if it had been my own case. . . . Mrs. Inchbald was always a great favourite with me. There is the true soul of woman breathing from what she writes, as much as if you heard her voice. It is as if Venus had written books. . . . I once sat on a sunny bank in a field, in which the green blades of corn waved in the fitful northern breeze, and read the letter in the "New Heloise" in which St. Preux describes the Pays de Vaud. I never felt what Shakespeare calls "my glassy existence" so much as then. . . . I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns, luxuriantly in books. I remember getting completely wet through one day and stopping at an inn (I think it was at Tewkesbury), where I sat up all night to read *Paul and Virginia.* Sweet were the showers in early youth that drenched my body, and sweet the drops of pity that fell upon the books I read! . . . I stopped two days at Bridgewater, and when I was tired of sauntering on the banks of its muddy river, returned to the inn and read *Camilla.* So have I loitered my life away, reading books, looking at pictures, going to plays, hearing, thinking, writing on what pleased me best. I have wanted only one thing to make me happy; but wanting that have wanted everything. . . . It was on the 10th of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of *The New Heloise,* at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. I had brought the book with me as a *bonne bouche* to crown the evening with. It was my birth-day, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. . . . For myself, I should like to browse on folios, and have to deal chiefly with authors that I have scarcely strength to lift, that are as solid as they are heavy, and if dull, are full of matter. It is delightful . . . to travel out of one's self into the Chaldee, Hebrew, and Egyptian characters; to have the palm-trees waving mystically in the margin of the page, and the camels moving slowly on in the distance of three thousand years. . . . Not far from the spot where I write [Winterslow Hut, February 20, 1828], I first read Chaucer's *The Flower and The Leaf,* and was charmed with that young beauty, shrouded in her bower, and listening with ever-fresh delight to the repeated song of the nightingale close by her—the impression of the scene, the vernal landscape, the cool of the morning, the gushing notes of the songstress,

"And ayen methought she sang close by mine ear,"

is as vivid as if it had been of yesterday.—*From various Essays: "My First Acquaintance with Poets," "A Farewell to Essay-writing," &c.*

Books are but one inlet of knowledge; and the powers of the mind, like those of the body, should be left open to all impressions. I applied too close to my studies, soon after I was of your age, and hurt myself irreparably by it. Whatever may be the value of learning, health and good spirits are of more. . . . By conversing with the *mighty dead*, we imbibe sentiment with knowledge. We become strongly attached to those who can no longer either hurt or serve us, except through the influence which they exert over the mind. We feel the presence of that power which gives immortality to human thoughts and actions, and catch the flame of enthusiasm from all ages and nations. . . . As to the books you will have to read by choice or for amusement, the best are the commonest. The names of many of them are already familiar to you. Read them as you grow up with all the satisfaction in your power, and make much of them. It is perhaps the greatest pleasure you will have in life, the one you will think of longest, and repent of least. If my life had been more full of calamity than it has been (much more than I hope yours will be), I would live it over again, my poor little boy, to have read the books I did in my youth.—*On the Conduct of Life; or Advice to a Schoolboy.*

[The following passages are from the last article which Hazlitt wrote. It is entitled *The Sick Chamber*, and appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* for August, 1830. Hazlitt died on the 18th of September of the same year, at the age of fifty-two. For some time he had been ailing, and all through the month of August was struggling with death. He seemed to live on "by a pure act of volition." His old and ever-dear friend, Charles Lamb—who said of him that "in his natural and healthy state, he was one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing," and "that he should go down to the grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion"—was beside him at the close, which was so peaceful that his son, who was sitting by his bed-side, did not know that he had gone, till the breathing had ceased for a moment or two. During his illness a friend saw him as he lay ghastly, shrunk, and helpless, on the bed from which he never afterwards rose. That friend said that his mind seemed to have weathered all the dangers of extreme sickness, and to be safe and as strong as ever; but the body had endured much decay. The article here quoted from, and another that preceded it, called *The Free Admission*,—brilliant, and full of fine things,—have never been reprinted in any of the editions of his works which have appeared since his death. The article possesses exceptional interest,—being the last composition of a man of true genius, written within a few weeks of his death. It exhibits many of the characteristics of its author—

his intellectual vigour and robustness, his keen sense of the Beautiful, his imagination, and passionate intensity. It presents, with undiminished power and vividness, the conditions and surroundings, the consolations and heart-sinkings, the fluctuations of thought and feeling, incident to the inmate of a sick-room. This Essay may truly be said to be unknown—buried as it has been for more than half-a-century in the dust-covered volume of a forgotten Periodical. As it concludes with a touching tribute to Books, and as these are often associated with the hush and quietude of a sick-chamber, the compiler may be forgiven for reverently and lovingly snatching from oblivion and preserving for future readers these latest recorded thoughts of a favourite author. Assuredly the works of Hazlitt will, in course of time, become better known than they now are, and take their fitting place in our Literature.]*

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* Bulwer [Lord Lytton], in his Essay entitled "Some Thoughts on the Genius of William Hazlitt," says:—

"The present century has produced many men of poetical genius, and some of analytical acumen; but I doubt whether it has produced anyone who has given to the world such signal proofs of the union of the two as William Hazlitt. . . . He possessed the critical faculty in its noblest degree—his taste was not the creature of schools and canons; it was begotten of Enthusiasm by Thought. . . . Scattered throughout his Essays is a wealth of thought and poetry, beside which half the contemporaries of their author seem as paupers. He had a keen sense of the Beautiful and the Subtile; and what is more, he was deeply imbued with sympathy for the humane. He ranks high amongst the social writers—his intuitive feeling was in favour of the multitude; yet he had nothing of the demagogue or

What a difference between this subject and my last—a "Free Admission!" Yet from the crowded theatre

litterateur; he did not pander to a single vulgar passion. When he died, he left no successor. Others may equal him, but none resemble. I must confess that few deaths of the great writers of my time ever affected me more powerfully than his. . . . He went down to dust without having won the crown for which he had so bravely struggled. . . . His faults have been harshly judged, because they have not been fairly analysed—they arose mostly from an arrogant and lordly sense of superiority. . . . He was the last man to play the thrifty with his thoughts—he sent them forth with an insolent ostentation, and cared not much what they shocked or whom they offended. . . . Posterity will do him justice. To the next age, he will stand among the foremost of the *thinkers* of the present; and late and tardy retribution will assuredly be his, which compensates to others the neglect to which men of genius sometimes are doomed;—that retribution which, long after the envy they provoked is dumb, and the errors they committed are forgotten—invests with interest everything associated with their names—making it an honour even to have been their contemporaries, and an hereditary rank to be their descendants."

The same critic, thirty years later, in an article on "Charles Lamb, and Some of His Companions," in the *Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1867, again writes of Hazlitt, and delivers this mature judgment of him:—

"But amidst all these intolerant prejudices and this wild extravagance of apparent hate, there are in Hazlitt from time to time—those times not unfrequent—outbursts of sentiment scarcely surpassed among the writers of our century for tender sweetness, rapid perceptions of truth and beauty in regions of criticism then but sparingly cultured—nay, scarcely discovered—and massive fragments of such composition as no hand of ordinary strength could hew out of the unransacked mines of our native language. . . . It is not as a guide that Hazlitt can be useful to any man. His merit is that of a companion in districts little trodden—a companion strong and hardy, who keeps our sinews to the sick chamber; from the noise, the glare, the keen delight, to the loneliness, the darkness, the dulness, and the pain, there is but one step. A breath of air, an overhanging cloud effects it; and though the transition is made in an instant, it seems as if it would last for ever. A sudden illness not only puts a stop to the career of our triumphs and agreeable sensations, but blots out and cancels all recollection of and desire for them. We lose the relish of enjoyment: we are effectually cured of our romance. Our bodies are confined to our beds: nor can our thoughts wantonly

in healthful strain; rough and irascible, whose temper will constantly offend us if we do not steadily preserve our own; but always animated, vivacious, brilliant in his talk; suggestive of truths, even where insisting on paradoxes; and of whom when we part company we retain impressions stamped with the crown-mark of indisputable genius. Gladly would we welcome among the choicer prose works of our age some volumes devoted to the more felicitous specimens of Hazlitt's genius. He needs but an abstract of his title deeds to secure a fair allotment in the ground, already overcrowded, which has been quaintly described by a Scandinavian poet as the garden-land lying south between Walhalla and the sea."

"In his Essays and other writings," says a critic of fine sympathies, the late Alexander Smith, "it is almost pathetic to notice how he clings to the peaceful images which the poet loves; how he reposes in their restful lines. . . . He is continually quoting Sidney's Arcadian image of the *shepherd-boy under the shade, piping as though he would never grow old,*—as if the recurrence of the image to his memory brought with it silence, sunshine, and waving trees. . . . When at his best, his style is excellent, concise, sinewy—laying open the stubborn thought as the sharp ploughshare the glebe. . . . His best Essays were, in a sense, autobiographical, because in them he recalls his enthusiasm, and the passionate hopes on which he fed his spirit."

detach themselves and take the road to pleasure, but turn back with doubt and loathing at the faint, evanescent phantom which has usurped its place. If the folding-doors of the imagination were thrown open or left ajar, so that from the disordered couch where we lay, we could still hail the vista of the past or future, and see the gay and gorgeous visions floating at a distance, however denied to our embrace, the contrast, though mortifying, might have something soothing in it, the mock splendour might be the greater for the actual gloom: but the misery is that we cannot conceive anything beyond or better than the present evil; we are shut up and spell-bound in that, the curtains of the mind are drawn close, we cannot escape from "the body of this death," our souls are conquered, dismayed, "cooped and cabined in," and thrown with the lumber of our corporeal frames in one corner of a neglected and solitary room. We hate ourselves and everything else; nor does one ray of comfort "peep through the blanket of the dark" to give us hope. How should we entertain the image of grace and beauty, when our bodies writhe with pain? To what purpose invoke the echo of some rich strain of music, when we ourselves can scarcely breathe? The very attempt is an impossibility.

It is amazing how little effect physical suffering or local circumstances have upon the mind, except while we are subject to their immediate influence. While the impression lasts, they are everything: when it is gone, they are nothing. We toss and tumble about in a sick bed: we lie on our right side, we then change to our left; we stretch ourselves on our backs, we turn on our faces; we wrap ourselves up under the clothes to exclude the cold, we throw them off to escape the heat and suffocation; we grasp the pillow in agony, we fling ourselves out of bed, we walk up and down the room with hasty or feeble steps; we return into bed; we are worn out with fatigue and pain, yet can get no repose for the one, or intermission for the other; we summon all our patience, or give vent to passion and petty rage: nothing avails; we seem wedded to our disease, "like life and death in disproportion met;" we make new efforts, try new expedients, but nothing appears to shake it off, or promise relief from our grim foe: it infixes its sharp sting into us, or overpowers us by its sickly and stunning weight: every moment is as much as we can bear, and yet there seems no end of our lengthening tortures; we are ready to faint with exhaustion, or work ourselves up to frenzy: we "trouble deaf Heaven with our bootless prayers:" we think our last hour has come, or peevishly wish it were, to put an end to the scene; . . . when lo! a change comes, the spell falls off, and the next moment we forget all that has happened to us. No sooner does our disorder turn its back upon us than we laugh at it. The state we have been in sounds like a dream, a fable; health is the order of the day, strength is ours *de jure* and *de facto*; and we discard all uncalled-for evidence to the contrary with a smile of contemptuous incredulity, just as we throw our physic-bottles out of the window! I see (as I awake from a short, uneasy doze) a golden light shine through my white window-curtains on the opposite wall:—is it the dawn of a new day, or the departing light of evening?

I do not well know, for the opium "they have drugged my posset with" has made strange havoc with my brain, and I am uncertain whether time has stood still, or advanced, or gone backward. By "puzzling o'er the doubt," my attention is drawn a little out of myself to external objects; and I consider whether it would not administer some relief to my monotonous langour, if I could call up a vivid picture of an evening sky I witnessed a short while before, the white fleecy clouds, the azure vault, the verdant fields and balmy air. In vain! the wings of fancy refuse to mount from my bedside. The air without has nothing in common with the closeness within: the clouds disappear, the sky is instantly overcast and black.

It is curious that, on coming out of a sick-room, where one has been pent some time, and grown weak and nervous, and looking at Nature for the first time, the objects that present themselves have a very questionable and spectral appearance, the people in the street resemble flies crawling about, and seem scarce half-alive. It is we who are just risen from a torpid and unwholesome state, and who impart our imperfect feelings of existence, health, and motion to others. Or it may be that the violence and exertion of the pain we have gone through make common every-day objects seem unreal and unsubstantial. It is not till we have established ourselves in form in the sitting-room, wheeled round the arm-chair to the fire (for this makes part of our re-introduction to the ordinary modes of being in all seasons,) felt our appetite return, and taken up a book, that we can be considered as at all restored to ourselves. And even then our first sensations are rather empirical than positive; as after sleep we stretch out our hands to know whether we are awake. This is the time for reading. Books are then indeed "a world, both pure and good," into which we enter with all our hearts, after our revival from illness and respite from the tomb, as with the freshness and novelty of youth. They are not merely acceptable as without too much exertion they pass the time and relieve *ennui;* but from a certain suspension and deadening of the passions, and abstraction from worldly pursuits, they may be said to bring back and be friendly to the guileless and enthusiastic tone of feeling with which we formerly read them. Sickness has weaned us *pro tempore* from contest and cabal; and we are fain to be docile and children again. All strong changes in our present pursuits throw us back upon the past. This is the shortest and most complete emancipation from our late discomfiture. We wonder that any one who has read *The History of a Foundling* should labour under an indigestion; nor do we comprehend how a perusal of the *Faery Queen* should not insure the true believer an uninterrupted succession of halcyon days. Present objects bear a retrospective meaning, and point to "a foregone conclusion." Returning back to life with half-strung nerves and shattered strength, we seem as when we first entered it with uncertain purposes and faltering aims. The machine has received a shock, and it moves on more tremulously than before, and not all at once in the beaten track. Startled at the approach of death, we are willing to get as far from it as we can by making a proxy of our former selves; and finding the precarious tenure by which we hold existence, and its last sands running out, we gather up and make the most of the fragments that memory has stored up for us. Everything is seen through a medium of reflection and contrast. We hear the sound of merry voices in the street; and this carries us back to the recollections of some country-town or village-group—

"We see the children sporting on the shore
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

A cricket chirps on the hearth, and we are reminded of Christmas gambols long ago. The very cries in the street seem to be of a former date; and the dry toast eats very much as it did—twenty years ago. A rose smells doubly sweet, after being stifled with tinctures and essences; and we enjoy the idea of a journey and an inn the more for having been bed-rid. But a book is the secret and sure charm to bring all these implied associations to a focus. I should prefer an old one, Mr. Lamb's favourite, the *Journey to Lisbon*, by Henry Fielding; or the *Decameron*, if I could get it. . . . Well, then, I have got the new paraphrase on the *Beggar's Opera*,—*Paul Clifford*,—by Bulwer, am fairly embarked in it; and at the end of the first volume, where I am galloping across the heath with the three highwaymen, while the moon is shining full upon them, feel my nerves so braced, and my spirits so exhilarated, that, to say truth, I am scarce sorry for the occasion that has thrown me upon the work and the author—have quite forgot my *Sick Room*, and am more than half ready to recant the doctrine that a *Free-Admission* to the theatre is

—"The true pathos and sublime
Of human life:"—

for I feel as I read that if the stage shows us the masks of men and the pageant of the world, books let us into their souls and lay open to us the secrets of our own. They are the first and last, the most home-felt, the most heart-felt of all our enjoyments!

CHARLES C. COLTON. 1780—1832.

So idle are dull readers, and so industrious are dull authors, that puffed nonsense bids fair to blow unpuffed sense wholly out of the field.

Some read to think,—these are rare; some to write,—these are common; and some read to talk,—and these form the great majority. The first page of an author not unfrequently suffices for all the purposes of this latter class: of whom it has been said, that they treat books as some do lords; they inform themselves of their *titles*, and then boast of an intimate acquaintance.

Many books require no thought from those who read them, and for a very simple reason;—they made no such demand upon those who wrote them. Those works therefore are the most valuable, that set our thinking faculties in the fullest operation. For as the solar light calls forth all the latent powers and dormant principles of vegetation contained in the kernel, but which, without such a stimulus, would neither have struck root downwards, nor borne fruit upwards, so it is with the light that is intellectual; it calls forth and awakens into energy those latent principles of thought in the minds of others, which, without this stimulus, reflection would not have matured, nor examination improved, nor action embodied.—*Lacon: or, Many Things in few words: Addressed to Those who Think.*

C. FROGNALL DIBDIN. 1776—1847.

Unless I have greatly deceived myself, this book will afford comfort to those who at the close of a long and actively spent life, will find a communion with their books one of the safest and surest methods of holding a communion with their God. The library of a good man is one of his most constant, cheerful, and instructive companions; and as it has delighted him in youth, so will it solace him in old age.—*The Library Companion.*

DR. WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

1780—1842.

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds; and these invaluable means of communication are in the reach of all. In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours. God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am; no matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling; if the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof—if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise; and Shakspeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart; and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom—I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship, and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live.

To make this means of culture effectual, a man must select good books, such as have been written by right-minded and strong-minded men, real thinkers; who, instead of diluting by repetition what others say, have something to say for themselves, and write to give relief to full earnest souls: and these works must not be skimmed over for amusement, but read with fixed attention, and a reverential love of truth. In selecting books, we may be aided much by those who have studied more than ourselves. But after all, it is best to be determined in this particular a good deal by our own tastes. The best books for a man are not always those which the wise recommend, but oftener those which meet the peculiar wants, the natural thirst of his mind, and therefore awaken interest and rivet thought. And here it may be well to observe, not only in regard to books, but in other respects, that self-culture must vary with the individual. All means do not equally suit us all. A man must unfold himself freely, and should respect the peculiar gifts or biasses by which nature has distinguished him from others. Self-culture does not demand the sacrifice of individuality; it does not regularly apply an established machinery; for the sake of torturing every man into one rigid shape, called perfection. As the human countenance, with the same features in us all, is diversified without end in the race, and is never the same in any two individuals; so the human soul, with the same grand powers and law, expands into an infinite variety of forms, and would be wofully stinted by modes of culture requiring all men to learn the same lesson, or to bend to the same rules.

I know how hard it is to some men, especially to those who spend much time in manual labour, to fix attention on books. Let them strive to overcome the difficulty, by choosing subjects of deep interest, or by reading in company with those whom they love. Nothing can supply the place of books. They are cheering or soothing companions in solitude, illness, affliction. The wealth of both continents would not compensate for the good they impart. Let every man, if possible, gather some good books under his roof, and obtain access for himself and family to some social library. Almost any luxury should be sacrificed to this.

One of the very interesting features of our times, is the multiplication of books, and their distribution through all conditions of society. At a small expense, a man can now possess himself of the most precious treasures of English literature. Books, once confined to a few by their costliness, are now accessible to the multitude; and in this way a change of habits is going on in society, highly favourable to the culture of the people. Instead of depending on casual rumour and loose conversation for most of their knowledge and objects of thought; instead of forming their judgments in crowds, and receiving their chief excitement from the voice of neighbours, men are now learning to study and reflect alone, to follow out subjects continuously, to determine for themselves what shall engage their minds, and to call to their aid the knowledge, original views, and reasonings of men of all countries and ages; and the results must be, a deliberateness and independence of judgment, and a thoroughness and extent of information, unknown in former times. The diffusion of these silent teachers, books, through the whole community, is to work greater effects than artillery, machinery, and legislation. Its peaceful agency is to supersede stormy revolutions. The culture, which it is to spread, whilst an unspeakable good to the individual, is also to become the stability of nations.—*Self-Culture: An Address introductory to the Franklin Lectures, at Boston,* 1838.

WASHINGTON IRVING. 1783—1859.

The scholar only knows how dear these silent, yet eloquent, companions of pure thoughts and innocent hours become in the season of adversity. When all that is worldly turns to dross around us, these only retain their steady value. When friends grow cold, and the converse of intimates languishes into vapid civility and common-place, these only continue the unaltered countenance of happier days, and cheer us with that true friendship which never deceived hope nor deserted sorrow.—*The Sketch Book.*

LEIGH HUNT. 1784—1859.

Were I to name, out of the times gone by,
The poets dearest to me, I should say,
Pulci for spirits, and a fine, free way;
Chaucer for manners, and close, silent eye;
Milton for classic taste, and harp strung high;
Spenser for luxury, and sweet, sylvan play;
Horace for chatting with, from day to day;
Shakspeare for all, but most, society.

But which take with me, could I take but one?
Shakspeare,—as long as I was unoppress'd
With the world's weight, making sad thoughts intenser;
But did I wish, out of the common sun,
To lay a wounded heart in leafy rest,
And dream of things far off and healing,—Spenser.

London Examiner, Dec. 24, 1815.

We like a small study, where we are almost in contact with our books. We like to feel them about us,—to be in the arms of our mistress Philosophy, rather than see her at a distance. . . . We do not know how our ideas of a study might expand with our walls. Montaigne, who was Montaigne "of that ilk," and lord of a great chateau, had a study "sixteen paces in diameter, with three noble and free prospects." . . . "The figure of my study is round, and has no more flat (bare) wall, than what is taken up by my table and my chairs: so that the remaining parts of the circle present me with a view of all my books at once, set upon five degrees of shelves round about me." A great prospect we hold to be a very disputable advantage, upon the same reasoning as before; but we like to have some green boughs about our windows, and to fancy ourselves as much as possible in the country when we are not there. Milton expressed a wish with regard to his study, extremely suitable to our present purpose. He would have the lamp in it *seen;* thus letting others into a share of his enjoyments, by the imagination of them.

> "And let my lamp at midnight hour
> Be *seen* in some high lonely tower,
> Where I may oft outwatch the Bear
> With thrice great Hermes; or unsphere
> The Spirit of Plato, to unfold
> What world or what vast regions hold
> The immortal mind, that hath forsook
> Her mansion in this fleshy nook."

The Indicator. 1819.

Sitting last winter among my books, and walled round with all the comfort and protection which they and my fire-side could afford me,—to wit, a table of high-piled books at my back, my writing desk on one side of me, some shelves on the other, and the feeling of the warm fire at my feet,—I began to consider how I loved the authors of those books; how I loved them too, not only for the imaginative pleasures they afforded me, but for their making me love the very books themselves, and delight to be in contact with them. I looked sideways at my Spenser, my Theocritus, and my Arabian Nights; then above them at my Italian Poets; then behind me at my Dryden and Pope, my Romances, and my Boccaccio; then on my left side at my Chaucer, who lay on my writing desk; and thought how natural it was in Charles Lamb to give a kiss to an old folio, as I once saw him do to Chapman's Homer. . . .

I entrench myself in my books, equally against sorrow and the weather. If the wind comes through a passage, I look about to see how I can fence it off by a better disposition of my moveables; if a melancholy thought is importunate, I give another glance at my Spenser. When I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to be able to lean my head against them. . . .

I like a great library next my study; but for the study itself, give me a small snug place almost entirely walled with books. There should be only one window in it, looking upon trees. Some prefer a place with few or no books at all; nothing but a chair or a table, like Epictetus: but I should say that these were philosophers, not lovers of books, if I did not recollect that Montaigne was both. He had a study in a round tower, walled as aforesaid. It is true, one forgets one's books while writing: at least they say so. For my part, I think I have them in a sort of sidelong mind's eye; like a second thought, which is none; like a waterfall, or a whispering wind. . . .

The very perusal of the backs is a "discipline of humanity." There Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old Radical friend: there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden: there the lion, Martin Luther, lies down with the Quaker lamb, Sewell: there Guzman d'Alfarache thinks himself fit company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his claims admitted. Even the "high fantastical" Duchess of Newcastle, with her laurel on her head, is received with grave honours, and not the less for declining to trouble herself with the constitutions of her maids. . . . .

How pleasant it is to reflect that the greatest lovers of books have themselves become books! What better metamorphosis could Pythagoras have desired! How Ovid and Horace exulted in anticipating theirs! And how the world have justified their exultation! They had a right to triumph over brass and marble. It is the only visible change which changes no further; which generates, and yet is not destroyed. Consider: mines themselves are exhausted; cities perish; kingdoms are swept away, and man weeps with indignation to think that his own body is not immortal. . . .

Yet this little body of thought that lies before me in the shape of a book has existed thousands of years; nor since the invention of the press, can any thing short of an universal convulsion of nature, abolish it. To a shape like this, so small, yet so comprehensive, so slight, yet so lasting, so insignificant, yet so venerable, turns the mighty activity of Homer, and so turning, is enabled to live and warm us for ever. To a shape like this turns the placid sage of Academus: to a shape like this the grandeur of Milton, the exuberance of Spenser, the pungent elegance of Pope, and the volatility of Prior. In one small room, like the compressed spirits of Milton, can be gathered together

"The assembled souls of all that men held wise."

May I hope to become the meanest of these existences? This is a question which every author, who is a lover of books, asks himself some time in his life; and which must be pardoned, because it cannot be helped. I know not. I cannot exclaim with the poet,

> "Oh that my name were numbered among theirs,
> Then gladly would I end my mortal days."

For my mortal days, few and feeble as the rest of them may be, are of consequence to others. But I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases myself, I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing as I do what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind, when he is no more. At all events, nothing, while I live and think, can deprive me of my value for such treasures. I can help the appreciation of them while I last, and love them till I die; and perhaps, if fortune turns her face once more in kindness upon me before I go, I may chance, some quiet day, to lay my over-beating temples on a book, and so have the death I most envy.*—*The Literary Examiner:* "*My Books.*" 1823.

The want we wish to supply by the *London Journal* is that of something more connected with *the ornamental*

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* "We think few can read this very lovely passage and not sympathise cordially in the wish so nobly conceived and so tenderly expressed. Something not to be replaced would be struck out of the gentler literature of our century, could the mind of Leigh Hunt cease to speak to us in a book."—*Lord Lytton (E. L. Bulwer). "Charles Lamb and some of His Companions," &c. Quarterly Review.* 1867.

part of utility,—with the art of extracting pleasurable ideas from the commonest objects, and the participations of a scholarly experience. In the metropolis there are thousands of improving and inquiring minds, capable of all the elegance of intellectual enjoyment, who, for want of education worthy of them, are deprived of a world of pleasures, in which they might have instructed others. We hope to be read by these. In every country town there is always a knot of spirits of this kind, generally young men, who are known, above others, for their love of books, for the liberality of their sentiments, and their desire to be acquainted with all that is going forward in connection with the graces of poetry and the fine arts. We hope to have these for our readers. . . . Pleasure is the business of this journal; we own it; we love to begin it with the word; it is like commencing the day with sunshine in the room. Pleasure for all who can receive pleasure; consolation and encouragement for the rest: this is our purpose. But then it is pleasure like that implied by our simile, innocent, kindly, we dare to add, instructive and elevating. Nor shall the gravest aspects of it be wanting. As the sunshine floods the sky and the ocean, and yet nurses the baby-buds of the roses on the wall, so we would fain open the largest and the very least sources of pleasure, the noblest that expands above us into the heavens, and the most familiar that catches our glance in the homestead. We would break up the surface of habit and indifference, and shew the treasures concealed beneath. Man has not yet learnt to enjoy the world he lives in. We would fain help him to render it productive of still greater joy. We would make adversity hopeful, prosperity sympathetic, all kinder, richer, and happier; and we have some right to assist in the endeavour, for there is scarcely a single joy or sorrow within the experience of our fellow creatures which we have not tasted; and the belief in the good and beautiful has never forsaken us. It has been medicine to us in sickness, riches in poverty, and the best part of all that has ever delighted us in health and wealth. . . . We have been at this work now, off and on, man and boy (for we began essay-writing while in our teens) for upwards of thirty years, and excepting that we would fain have done yet more, we feel the same as we have done throughout; and we have the same hope, the same love, the same faith in the beauty and goodness of nature and all her prospects, in space and in time; we could almost add, if a sprinkle of white hairs in our black would allow us, the same youth. . . . We have had so much sorrow, and yet are capable of so much joy, and receive pleasure from so many familiar objects, that we sometimes think we should have had an unfair portion of happiness, if our life had not been one of more than ordinary trial.—*London Journal, April* 1, 1834.

Conceive what our pleasure must be when those who have a right to judge pronounce our Journal to have done well, both in spirit and letter, and unite heartily in approving the cultivation of one sequestered spot in the regions of literature. . . . It is our ambition to be one of the sowers of a good seed in places where it is not common, but would be most profitable; to be one of those who should try to render a sort of public loving-kindness a grace of common life, a conventional, and for that very reason, in the highest sense of the word, a social and universal elegance. We dare to whisper in the ears of the wisest, and therefore of the all-hearing and the kindliest judging, that we would fain do something, however small and light, towards Christianizing public minds. . . . If we end in doing nothing but extending a faith in capabilities of any sort, and showing some thousands of our fellow-creatures that sources of amusement and instruction await but a touch in the objects around them, to start up like magic, and enrich the meanest hut, perhaps the most satiated *ennui*, we shall have done something not unworthy.—*London Journal, August* 27, 1834.

Our object was to put more sunshine into the feelings of our countrymen, more good will and good humour, a greater *habit* of being pleased with one another, and with everything, and therefore a greater power of dispensing with uneasy sources of satisfaction. We wished to create one corner and field of periodical literature in which men might be more of hope and cheerfulness, and of the cultivation of peaceful and flowery thoughts, without the accompaniment of anything inconsistent with them; we knew that there was a desire at the bottom of every human heart to retain a faith in such thoughts, and to see others believe in them and recommend them; and heartily have anxious as well as happy readers in this green and beautiful England responded to our belief. . . . Still blow then, ye fair winds, and keep open upon us, ye blue heavens—still hail us as ye go, all gallant brother voyagers, and encourage us to pursue the kindly task which love and adversity have taught us, touching at all curious shores of reality and romance, endeavouring to make them know and love one another, to learn what is good against the roughest elements, or how the suffering that cannot be remedied may be best endured, to bring news of hope and joy and exaltation from the wings of the morning, and the uttermost parts of the sea, making familiar companions, but not the less revered on that account, of the least things on earth and the greatest things apart from it—of the dust and the globe, and the divided moon, of sun and stars, and the loneliest meetings of man's thought with immensity, which is not too large for his heart, though it be for his knowledge; because knowledge is but man's knowledge, but the heart has a portion of God's wisdom, which is Love.*—*London Journal, Sept.* 4, 1834.

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* "The *London Journal* was a miscellany of essays, criticisms, and passages from books. The note which it struck was of too æsthetical a nature for cheap readers in those days; and in 1836, after attaining the size of a goodly folio double volume, it terminated. I have since had the pleasure of seeing the major part of the essays renew their life, and become accepted by the public, in a companion volume to the *Indicator,* called the *Seer.* The *Seer* does not mean a prophet, or one gifted with second sight, but an observer of ordinary things about him, gifted by his admiration of nature with the power of discerning what every body else may discern by a cultivation of the like secret of satisfaction. . . . I have been pleased to see that the *London Journal* maintains a good steady price with my old friends, the bookstalls. . . . Assuredly its large, triple-columned, eight hundred pages, full of cheerful ethics, of reviews, anecdotes,

We still find ourselves halting as instinctively at the humblest, or even the most familiar book-stall, as we

legends, table-talk, and romances of real life, make a reasonable sort of library, &c."—*Autobiography.*

The *London Journal*, in two folio volumes, is often to be met with in second-hand book catalogues, and will be found a perfect storehouse of literary amenities and delights. An ardent admirer of Hunt—Mr. Frank Carr, of Newcastle—who chooses to veil his identity under the *nom de plume* of "Lancelot Cross," has devoted a dainty little volume to a description of the merits and varied contents of the *London Journal*, as a Typical Literary Miscellany. He says of it:—

"The charm of his articles does not lie alone in their ever sparkling freshness, in the morning sweetness that pervades them, but in the largeness of their scope—in their consideration, according to the call of the moment, of all human needs. Hunt's was of the inquisitive and exploring order of minds; industry and method he shared with hundreds of other literary workers—but he superadded (and therein lay his power) a genial humanity which looked on all things with an equal eye, moved towards all with a warm sympathising heart, and sought good in all things with a clear, trustful mind. His style was conversational picturesqueness, richness of ready learning, *plus* unfailing cordiality and communicativeness. If we had to state his power in a brief sentence it would be—the alchemy of intelligent loving-kindness."

"There is to be found in those two volumes," he says, "matter that will stir every pure power of the soul—smiles, tears, deep thought, and devotion. It is a book that can be laid before the child, the lady, the poet, and the philosopher. It is a noble boast when an author can declare that he leaves not 'one line which, dying, he could wish to blot;' but it is tenfold higher praise when it may be said of him that he has not only left his multifarious writings pure,—all misconceptions atoned for, all rash judgments corrected—(as when he says 'How pleasant it is thus to find oneself reconciled to men whom we have ignorantly used to do when first fresh from school. In vain have got cold feet at it, shivering, wind-beaten sides, and black-fingered gloves. The dusty old siren still delays us, charming with immortal beauty inside her homely attire, and singing songs of old poets. We still find ourselves diving even into the sixpenny or threepenny "box," in spite of eternal disappointment, and running over whole windows of books, which we saw but three days before for the twentieth time, and of which we could repeat by heart a good third of the titles. Nothing disconcerts us but absolute dirt, or an ill-tempered looking woman. What delights us is to see a plentiful sprinkle of old poetry, little Elzevir classics, Ariostos full of loving comment, and a woman getting

under-valued, and how fortunate to have lived long enough to say so')—but that in the immense mass of charming selections that he has made and commented upon over a long period of time, there is not one sullied by temper, pruriency, or factiousness. Their range includes the fruits of all Intellects, of all forms of human endeavour, from the sayings of childhood to those of the wisest of the sons of man; from instances of domestic magnanimity to the heroic achievements in art, science, and public strife, and each and all convey the most ennobling lessons. We love the glorious two folios for their own sake, and because, in addition to other great merits, they are a Prime Exemplar of Periodical Literature for fulness, variety, ease, elegance, enthusiasm, and urbanity."

Christopher North (Professor Wilson), who at one time virulently attacked Leigh Hunt, made the *amende honorable* in thus speaking of the *London Journal:* "It is not only beyond all comparison, but out of all sight the most entertaining and instructive of all the cheap periodicals; and when laid, as it duly is once a week, on my breakfast-table, it lies there,—but is not permitted to lie long—like a spot of sunshine dazzling the snow."

gradually better and better dressed, her afternoon ribbons matching with her pleasant face, and a chubby urchin in her arms.

Nothing delights us more than to overhaul some dingy tome, and read a chapter gratuitously. Occasionally when we have opened some very attractive old book, we have stood reading for hours at the stall, lost in a brown study and worldly forgetfulness, and should probably have read on to the end of the last chapter, had not the vendor of published wisdom offered, in a satirically polite way, to bring us out a chair—"Take a chair, sir; you must be tired."

They who can afford to give a second-hand bookseller what he asks in his catalogue, may in general do it with good reason, as well as a safe conscience. He is of an anxious and industrious class of men, compelled to begin the world with laying out ready money and living very closely; and if he prospers, the commodities and people he is conversant with, encourage the good and intellectual impressions with which he set out, and generally end in procuring him a reputation for liberality as well as acuteness.

A Second-Hand Bookseller's Catalogue is not a mere catalogue or list of saleables as the uninitiated may fancy. Even a common auctioneer's catalogue of goods and chattels, suggests a thousand reflections to a peruser of any knowledge; judge then what the case must be with a catalogue of Books; the very titles of which run the rounds of the whole world, visible and invisible; geographies—biographies—histories—loves—hates—joys—sorrows—cookeries—sciences—fashion,—and eternity! We speak on this subject from the most literal experience; for often and often have we cut open a new catalogue of old books, with all the fervour and ivory folder of a first love; often read one at tea; nay, at dinner; and have put crosses against dozens of volumes in the list, out of the pure imagination of buying them, the possibility being out of *the question!* —*Series of Papers in The Monthly Repository*, 1837, *entitled "Retrospective Review, or Companion to The Lover of Old Books;" Old Books and Bookshops—Beneficence of Bookstalls—Catalogues of Cheap Books.*

This book *(A Book for a Corner)*, for the most part, is a collection of passages from such authors as retain, if not the highest, yet the most friendly and as it were domestic hold upon us during life, and sympathize with us through all portions of it. Hence the first extract is a Letter addressed to an Infant, the last the Elegy in the Churchyard, and the intermediate ones have something of an analogous reference to the successive stages of existence. It is therefore intended to be read by intelligent persons of all times of life, the youthful associations in it being such as the oldest readers love to call to mind, and the oldest such as all would gladly meet with in their decline. It has no politics in it, no polemics, nothing to offend the delicatest mind. The innocentest boy and the most cautious of his seniors might alike be glad to look over the other's shoulder, and find him in his corner perusing it. This may be speaking in a boastful manner; but an Editor has a right to boast of his originals, especially when they are such as have comforted and delighted him throughout his own life, and are for that reason recommended by him to others.

This compilation is intended for all lovers of books, at every time of life, from childhood to old age, particularly such as are fond of the authors it quotes, and who enjoy their perusal most in the quietest places. It is intended for the boy or girl who loves to get with a book into a corner—for the youth who on entering life finds his advantage in having become acquainted with books—for the man in the thick of life, to whose spare moments books are refreshments—and for persons in the decline of life, who reflect on what they have experienced, and to whom books and gardens afford their tranquillest pleasures. It is a book (not to say it immodestly) intended to lie in old parlour windows, in studies, in cottages, in cabins aboard ship, in country-inns, in country-houses, in summer-houses, in any houses that have wit enough to like it, and are not the mere victims of a table covered with books for show. . . .

Some of the most stirring men in the world, persons in the thick of business of all kinds, and indeed with the business of the world itself on their hands,—Lorenzo de Medici, for instance, who was at once the great merchant and the political arbiter of his time,—have combined with their other energies the greatest love of books, and found no recreation at once so wholesome and so useful. We hope many a man of business will refresh himself with the short pieces in these volumes, and return to his work the fitter to baffle craft, and yet retain a reverence for simplicity. Every man who has a right sense of business, whether his business be that of the world or of himself, has a respect for all right things apart from it; because business with him is not a mindless and merely instinctive industry, like that of a beetle rolling its ball of clay, but an exercise of faculties congenial with the other powers of the human being, and all working to some social end. Hence he approves of judicious and refreshing leisure—of domestic and social evenings—of suburban retreats—of gardens—of ultimate retirement "for good"—of a reading and reflective old age. Such retirements have been longed for, and in many instances realized, by wise and great men of all classes, from the Diocletians of old to the Foxes and Burkes of our own days. Warren Hastings, who had ruled India, yearned for the scenes of his boyhood; and lived to be happy in them. The wish to possess a country-house, a retreat, a nest, a harbour of some kind from the storms and even from the agitating pleasures of life, is as old as the sorrows and joys of civilization. The child feels it when he "plays at house;" the schoolboy, when he is reading in his corner; the lover, when he thinks of his mistress. Epicurus felt it in his garden; Horace and Virgil expressed their desire of it in passages which the sympathy of mankind has rendered immortal. It was the end of all the wisdom and experience of Shakspeare. He retired to his native town, and built himself a house in which he died. And who else does not occasionally "flit" somewhere meantime if he can? The country for many miles round London, and indeed in most other places, is adorned with houses and grounds of men of business, who are whirled to and fro on weekly or daily evenings, and who would all find something to approve in the closing chapters of our work. . . .

It is Books that teach us to refine on our pleasures when young, and which, having so taught us, enable us to recall them with satisfaction when old. For let the half-witted say what they will of delusions, no thorough reader ever ceased to believe in his books, whatever doubts they might have taught him by the way. They are pleasures too palpable and habitual for him to deny. The habit itself is a pleasure. They contain his young dreams and his old discoveries; all that he has lost, as well as all that he has gained; and, as he is no surer of the gain than of the loss, except in proportion to the strength of his perceptions, the dreams, in being renewed, become truths again. He is again in communion with the past; again interested in its adventures, grieving with its griefs, laughing with its merriment, forgetting the very chair and room he is sitting in. Who, in the mysterious operation of things, shall dare to assert in what unreal corner of time and space that man's mind is; or what better proof he has of the existence of the poor goods and chattels about him, which at that moment (to him) are non-existent? "Oh!" people say, "but he wakes up, and sees them there." Well; he woke *down* then, and saw the rest. What we distinguish into dreams and realities, are, in both cases, but representatives of impressions. Who shall know what difference there is in them at all, save that of degree, till some higher state of existence help us to a criterion?

For our part, such real things to us are books, that, if habit and perception make the difference between real and unreal, we may say that we more frequently wake out of common life to *them*, than out of them to common life. Yet we do not find the life the less real. We only feel books to be a constituent part of it; a world, as the poet says,

> "Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and
> blood,
> Our pastime and our happiness will grow."

. . . And yet, when readers wake up to that other dream of life, called real life (and we do not mean to deny its palpability), they do not find their enjoyment of it diminished. It is increased—increased by the contrast—by the variety—by the call upon them to show the faith which books have originally given them in all true and good things, and which books, in spite of contradiction and disappointment, have constantly maintained. Mankind are the creatures of books, as well as of other circumstances; and such they eternally remain; proofs, that the race is a noble and believing race, and capable of whatever books can stimulate.

The volumes now offered to our fellow readers originated in this kind of passion for books. They were suggested by a wish we had long felt to get up a book for our private enjoyment, and of a very particular and unambitious nature. It was to have consisted of favourite passages, not out of the authors we most admired, but those whom we most love; and it was to have commenced, as the volumes do, with Shenstone's "Schoolmistress," and ended with Gray's "Elegy."

It was to have contained indeed little which the volumes do not comprise, though not intended to be half so big, and it was to have proceeded on the same plan of beginning with childhood and ending with the church-yard. We did not intend to omit the greatest authors on account of their being the greatest, but because they moved the feelings too strongly. What we desired was not an excitement, but a balm. Readers, who have led stirring lives, have such men as Shakspeare with them always, in their very struggles and sufferings, and in the tragic spectacles of the world. Great crowds and great passions are Shakspeares; and we, for one (and such we take to be the case with many readers), are sometimes as willing to retire from their "infinite agitation of wit," as from strifes less exalted; and retreat into the placider corners of genius more humble. It is out of no disrespect to their greatness; neither, we may be allowed to say, is it from any fear of being unable to sustain it; for we have seen perhaps as many appalling faces of things in our time as they have, and we are always ready to confront more if duty demand it. But we do not choose to be always suffering over again in books what we have suffered in the world. We prefer, when in a state of repose, to renew what we have enjoyed—to possess wholly what we enjoy still—to discern in the least and gentlest things the greatest and sweetest intentions of Nature—and to cultivate those soothing, serene, and affectionate feelings, which leave us in peace with all the world, and in good hope of the world to come. The very greatest genius, after all, is not the greatest thing in the world, any more than the greatest city in the world is the country or the sky. It is a concentration of some of its greatest powers, but it is not the greatest diffusion of its might. It is not the habit of its success, the stability of its sereneness. And this is what readers like ourselves desire to feel and know. The greatest use of genius is but to subserve to that end; to further the means of enjoying it, and to freshen and keep it pure; as the winds and thunders, which come rarely, are purifiers of the sweet fields, which are abiding. . . .

We have imagined a book-loving man, or man able to refresh himself with books, at every successive period of his life ;—the child at his primer, the sanguine boy, the youth entering the world, the man in the thick of it, the man of alternate business and repose, the retired man calmly considering his birth and his death; and in this one human being we include, of course, the whole race and both sexes, mothers, wives, and daughters, and all which they do to animate and sweeten existence. Thus our invisible, or rather many-bodied hero (who is the reader himself), is in the first instance a baby; then a child under the "School-mistress" of Shenstone; then the schoolboy with Gray and Walpole, reading poetry and romance; then "Gil Blas" entering the world; then the sympathiser with the "John Buncles" who enjoy it, and the "Travellers" who fill it with enterprise; then the matured man beginning to talk of disappointments, and standing in need of admonition "Against Inconsistency in his Expectations" [the title of an admirable Essay by Mrs. Barbauld]; then the reassured man comforted by his honesty and his just hopes, and refreshing himself with his *Club* or his country-lodging, his pictures, or his theatre; then the retiring, or retired, or finally old man, looking back with tenderness on his enjoyments, with regret for his errors, with comfort in his virtues, and with a charity for all men, which gives him a right to the comfort; loving all the good things he ever loved, particularly the books which have been his companions and the childhood which he meets again in the fields; and neither wishing nor fearing to be gathered into that kindly bosom of Nature, which covers the fields with flowers, and is encircled with the heavens. . . .

A universalist, in one high bibliographical respect, may be said to be the only true reader; for he is the only reader on whom no writing is lost. Too many people approve no books but such as are representatives of some opinion or passion of their own. They read, not to have human nature reflected on them, and so be taught to know and to love everything, but to be reflected themselves as in a pocket mirror, and so interchange admiring looks with their own narrow cast of countenance. The universalist alone puts up with difference of opinion, by reason of his own very difference; because his difference is a right claimed by him in the spirit of universal allowance, and not a privilege arrogated by conceit. He loves poetry and prose, fiction and matter of fact, seriousness and mirth, because he is a thorough human being, and contains portions of all the faculties to which they appeal. A man who can be nothing but serious, or nothing but merry, is but half a man. The lachrymal or the risible organs are wanting in him. He has no business to have eyes or muscles like other men. The universalist alone can put up with *him*, by reason of the very sympathy of his antipathy. He understands the defect enough to pity, while he dislikes it. The universalist is the only reader who can make something out of books for which he has no predilection. He sees differences in them to sharpen his reasoning; sciences which impress on him a sense of his ignorance; nay, languages which, if they can do nothing else, amuse his eye and set him thinking of other countries. . . .

Our compilation, therefore, though desirous to please all who are willing to be pleased, is ambitious to satisfy this sort of person most of all. It is of *his* childhood we were mostly thinking when we extracted the "Schoolmistress." *He* will thoroughly understand the wisdom lurking beneath the playfulness of its author. *He* will know how wholesome as well as amusing it is to become acquainted with books like "Gil Blas" and "Joseph Andrews." *He* will derive agreeable terror from "Sir Bertram" and the "Haunted Chamber;" will assent with delighted reason to every sentence in "Mrs. Barbauld's Essay;" will feel himself wandering into solitudes with "Gray;" shake honest hands with "Sir Roger de Coverley;" be ready to embrace "Parson Adams," and to chuck "Pounce" out of window, instead of the hat; will travel with "Marco Polo" and "Mungo Park;" stay at home with "Thomson;" retire with "Cowley;" be industrious with "Hutton;" sympathizing with "Gay and Mrs. Inchbald;" laughing with (and at) "Buncle;" melancholy, and forlorn, and self-restored, with the shipwrecked mariner of "De Foe." There are "Robinson Crusoes" in the moral as well as physical world, and even a universalist may be one of them;—men, cast on desert islands of thought and speculation; without companionship; without worldly resources; forced to arm and clothe themselves out of the remains of shipwrecked hopes, and to make a home for their solitary hearts in the nooks and corners of imagination and reading. It is not the worse lot in the world. Turned to account for others, and embraced with patient cheerfulness, it may, with few exceptions, even be one of the best. We hope our volume may light into the hands of such men. Every extract which is made in it, has something of a like second-purpose, beyond what appears on its face. There is amusement for those who require nothing more, and instruction in the shape of amusement for those who choose to find it. . . .

Our book may have little novelty in the least sense of the word; but it has the best in the greatest sense; that is to say, *never-dying novelty*;—antiquity hung with ivy-blossoms and rose-buds; old friends with the ever-new faces of wit, thought, and affection. Time has proved the genius with which it is filled. "Age cannot wither it," nor "custom stale its variety." We ourselves have read, and shall continue to read it to our dying day; and we should not say thus much, especially on such an occasion, if we did not know, that hundreds and thousands would do the same, whether they read it in this collection or not.—*Introduction to A Book for a Corner. Selections in Prose and Verse from Authors the best suited to that mode of enjoyment, with Comments on each, and General Introduction.* 1849.

I must therefore end life as I began it, in what is perhaps my only true vocation, that of a love of nature and books; complaining of nothing,—grateful, if others will not complain of me,—a little proud perhaps (nature allows such balm to human weakness) of having been found not unworthy of doing that for the Good Cause by my sufferings, which I can no longer pretend to do by my pen,—and possessed of one golden secret, tried in the fire, which I still hope to recommend in future writings; namely, the art of finding as many things to love as possible in our path through life, let us otherwise try to reform it as we may.—*Farewell Address in the Monthly Repository.* 1838.

I am not aware that I have a single enemy, and I accept the fortunes, good and bad, which have occurred to me, with the same disposition to believe them the best that could have happened, whether for the correction of what was wrong in me, or for the improvement of what was right. I have never lost cheerfulness of mind or opinion. What evils there are, I find to be, for the most part, relieved with many consolations: some I find to be necessary to the requisite amount of good; and every one of them I find come to a termination, for either they are cured and live, or are killed and die; and in the latter case I see no evidence to prove that a little finger of them aches any more.—*Autobiography.*

[After giving some account of his religious views and convictions, he thus concludes his "Autobiography"]:*

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* When Hunt's "Autobiography" appeared in 1850, Carlyle read it with the deepest interest, and wrote to the author ex-

Such are the doctrines, and such only, accompanied by expositions of the beauties and wonders of God's great

pressing his admiration of the work. A letter more overflowing with loving-kindness, and hearty recognition and sympathy, is not to be found in the whole range of literary correspondence. A *verbatim* reprint of this letter has never before appeared. The following is a faithful reproduction of the original, of which the compiler of this volume is the fortunate possessor:—

"Dear Hunt,

"I have just finished your 'Autobiography,' which has been most pleasantly occupying all my leisure these three days; and you must permit me to write you a word upon it, out of the fulness of the heart, while the impulse is still fresh, to thank you. This good Book, in every sense one of the best I have read this long while, has awakened many old thoughts, which never were extinct, or even properly *asleep*, but which (like so much else) have had to fall silent amid the tempests of an evil time,—Heaven mend it! A word from me, once more, I know, will not be unwelcome, while the world is talking of you.

"Well, I call this an excellently good Book; by far the best of the autobiographic kind I remember to have read in the English language; and indeed, except it be Boswell's of Johnson, I do not know where we have such a Picture drawn of a human Life, as in these three volumes. A pious, ingenious, altogether *human* and worthy Book; imaging with graceful honesty and free felicity, many interesting objects and persons on your life-path,—and imaging throughout, what is best of all, a gifted, gentle, patient, and valiant human soul, as it buffets its way thro' the billows of the time, and will not drown, tho' often in danger; *cannot* be drowned, but conquers, and leaves a track of radiance behind it: that, I think, comes out more clearly to me than in any other of your Books; and that I can venture to assure you is the best of all results to realise in a Book or written record. In fact this Book has been like an exercise of *devotion* to me: I have not assisted at any sermon, liturgy or litany, this long while, that has had so religious an effect on me. Thanks in the name of all men! And believe along with me that this Book

book of the universe, which will be preached in the temples of the earth, including those of our beloved country, England, its beautiful old ivied turrets and their green neighbourhood, then, for the first time, thoroughly uncontradicted and heavenly; with not a sound in them more terrible than the stormy yet sweet organ, analogous to the beneficent winds and tempests; and no thought of here or hereafter, that can disturb the quiet aspect of the graves, or the welcome of the new-born darling, and that such a consummation may come slowly but surely, without intermission in its advance, and without an injury to a living soul, will be the last prayer, as it must needs be among the latest words of the author of this book.

[To some readers of these pages it may appear that the passages from Leigh Hunt's writings occupy a disproportionate space, when compared with the selections given from other authors. In explanation, the compiler would remark that, of all the authors quoted, this one affords the greatest abundance, variety, and appropriateness of thought on the subject-matter of the present volume, viz., the consolations, companionship, and pleasures of Books. On this special topic, and others

will be welcome to other generations as well as to ours—and long may you live to write more Books for us; and may the evening sun be softer on you (and on me) than the noon sometimes was!

"Adieu, dear Hunt, (you must let me use this familiarity, for I am an old fellow too now as well as you). I have often thought of coming up to see you once more; and perhaps I shall one of these days (tho' horribly sick and lonely, and beset with spectral lions, go whitherward I may); but whether I do or not, believe for ever in my regard. And so God bless you.

"Yours heartily,
"T. Carlyle."

having close affinity to it, no other author has left behind him so many beautiful thoughts; nor can a more interesting example be adduced of a long and anxious life finding its best solace in the comfort of Books. Leigh Hunt is one of the most striking *exemplars* of a genuine Book-Lover—one to whom Books were a world of real, exhaustless delights. With catholic tastes, and a very wide range of sympathies, he was tolerant of every variety and form of thought and opinion, and hospitably entertained, without stint or limit, every intellectual guest who came in the shape of a book. His refined critical power, wide culture, and subtle perception of beauty made him a matchless interpreter of our great poets and dramatists—Chaucer, Spenser, Marlow, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton, Webster, Milton, Marvel, Dryden, Pope, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and others—as exemplified in his "Imagination and Fancy," and "Wit and Humour;"* —in which the essayist and critic shows himself intrinsically competent to his theme, and "makes the reader feel," as has been happily remarked, "that he is taking a most delicious tour through every species of poetical beauty with one deeply imbued with every point of view of the glorious scenery he has himself so long dwelt amongst." He had also a keen relish for the fine things that lie hidden in the pages of comparatively unknown and half-forgotten authors — bringing to light quaint beauties and lurking flavours unsuspected by the reader, as they were probably undesigned by the writer. The excellent sense and sanity of his mind, giving balance to his critical faculties, his warm and generous sympathies, and that goodness of heart which is an essential requisite of a good critic, constitute him, without dispute, one of the most genial and discriminating of literary guides. "It is not every consummate man of letters of whom it can be unhesitatingly affirmed that he was true, brave, just, and pious." We cannot take farewell of Hunt and his writings in words more appropriate than those used by his eldest son at the conclusion of the introduction to his father's "Autobiography": "To promote the happiness of his kind, to minister to the more educated appreciation of order and beauty, to open more widely the door of the library, and more widely the window of the library looking out upon nature—these were the purposes that guided his studies, and animated his labours to the very last."]*

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* The full titles of these two works are:—

"Imagination and Fancy; or Selections from the English Poets, illustrative of those first requisites of their Art; with markings of the best passages, critical notices of the writers, and an essay in answer to the question, 'What is Poetry?'" 1845.

"Wit and Humour: selected from the English Poets; with an illustrative essay and critical comments." 1846.

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* The best writers and finest critics of his time—Lamb, Keats, Shelley, Hazlitt, Forster, Talfourd, Carlyle, Bulwer, Macaulay, Dickens, Thackeray, Jerrold, Charles Cowden Clarke, Lord Houghton, and many others—have borne cordial testimony to the fine genius of this essayist, who remained to the last "true as steel" to the best hopes of human nature.

LOVE PEACOCK. 1785—1866.

[Dr. Folliott *loquitur*] There is nothing more fit to be looked at than the outside of a book. It is, as I may say from repeated experience, a pure and unmixed pleasure to have a goodly volume lying before you, and to know that you may open it if you please, and need not open it unless you please. It is a resource against *ennui*, if *ennui* should come upon you. To have the resource and not to feel the *ennui*, to enjoy your bottle in the present, and your book in the indefinite future, is a delightful condition of human existence. There is no place, in which a man can move or sit, in which the outside of a book can be otherwise than an innocent and becoming spectacle.—*Crotchet Castle*, *Chap.* vii., "*The Sleeping Venus.*"

THOMAS DE QUINCEY. 1786—1859.

A great scholar, in the highest sense of the term, is not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the Angel of the Resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life.

And of this let every one be assured—that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read, many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mould him through life like the forgotten incidents of childhood.

At this hour, five hundred years since their creation, the tales of Chaucer, never equalled on this earth for their tenderness, and for life of picturesqueness, are read familiarly by many in the charming language of their natal day, and by others in the modernisations of Dryden, of Pope, and Wordsworth. At this hour, one thousand eight hundred years since their creation, the Pagan tales of Ovid, never equalled on this earth for the gaiety of their movement and the capricious graces of their narrative, are read by all Christendom. This man's people and their monuments are dust; but *he* is alive: he has survived them, as he told us that he had it in his commission to do, by a thousand years; "and *shall* a thousand more."—*Essay on Pope.*

LORD BROUGHAM. 1778—1868.

There is something positively agreeable to all men, to all, at least, whose nature is not most grovelling and base, in gaining knowledge for its own sake. . . . This kind of gratification is of a pure and disinterested nature, and has no reference to any of the common purposes of life; yet it is a pleasure—an enjoyment. . . . The mere gratification of curiosity; the knowing more to-day than we knew yesterday; the understanding clearly what before seemed obscure and puzzling; the contemplation of general truths, and the comparing together of different things,—is an agreeable occupation of the mind; and, besides the present enjoyment, elevates the faculties above low pursuits, purifies and refines the passions, and helps our reason to assuage their violence.—*Practical Observations on the Education of the People.*

ISAAC TAYLOR. 1787—1865.

As to daily social readings—continued from year to year, while a family is running through its course of changes—they constitute a bright continuity of its intellectual and moral existence. This communion of intelligence, and these recollections of books, that have left an impression upon the memories of the listeners—they readily coalesce with the remembrance of family events. I have said the same as to the connection of the seasons with family history. The book, and the events that marked the time of its perusal, weld into one; and especially it will be so if, in any instance, the heavy hammer of suffering and sorrow has come, stroke upon stroke, so as to make all one in the memory. Taking a glance round at my own shelves, I see books, never to be forgotten—for they were in course of reading at such and such a time.—*Personal Recollections in "Good Words,"* 1865.

RICHARD WHATELY. 1787—1863.

If, in reading books, a man does not choose wisely, at any rate he has the chance offered to him of doing so. After all, it is the will of Providence that man should be exposed to the temptations of hearing truth and falsehood; of seeing a good and a bad example. Wherever we go in life, even in the darkest alleys of literature, a good and an evil example will always be put before us; and because this world is not heaven, we must be left to make our choice between good and evil; but the more a person's views are enlarged, and the wider the choice that is offered to him, the better hope there is that he may take the good and leave the evil. All that we can do is to give him light—light in every possible direction; and if a man chooses to make a bad use of his eyes and ears, and of his other faculties, all that we can say is, we have done our best; we cannot make the world heaven; but if we put it into the power of men to cultivate their minds, and get a knowledge of good sense, that is precisely the system which the Almighty Himself has directed us to pursue, and which is pursued by Himself in the government of His creation. We must guide ourselves with His help, according to our own responsibilities, and the faculties He has endowed us with. We may say, as the inspired prophet did in the name of his Heavenly Master to his people, "Behold, I set before you this day good and evil; now, therefore, choose good."—*Speech of Archbishop Whately at the Manchester Athenæum, October,* 1846.

He who not only understands fully what he is reading, but is earnestly occupying his mind with the matter of it, will be likely to read as if he understood it, and thus to make others understand it; and in like manner, with a view to the impressiveness of the delivery, he who not only feels it, but is exclusively absorbed with that feeling, will be likely to read as if he felt it, and to communicate the impression to his hearers. But this cannot be the case if he is occupied with the thought of what their opinion will be of this reading, and how his voice ought to be regulated; if, in short, he is thinking of himself, and, of course, in the same degree abstracting his attention from that which ought to occupy it exclusively. It is not, indeed, desirable that in reading the Bible, for example, or anything that is not intended to appear as his own composition, he should deliver what are avowedly another's sentiments in the same style as if they were such as arose in his own mind; but it is desirable that he should deliver them as if he were reporting another's sentiments which were both fully understood and felt in all their force by the reporter; and the only way to do this effectually—with such modulation of voice and gesture as are suitable to each word and passage—is to fix his mind earnestly on the meaning, and leave nature and habit to suggest the utterance.

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER (BARRY CORNWALL). 1787—1874.

All round the room my silent servants wait,—
My friends in every season, bright and dim
Angels and seraphim
Come down and murmur to me, sweet and low,
And spirits of the skies all come and go
Early and late;
From the old world's divine and distant date,
From the sublimer few,
Down to the poet who but yester-eve
Sang sweet and made us grieve,

All come, assembling here in order due.
And here I dwell with Poesy, my mate,
With Erato and all her vernal sighs,
Great Clio with her victories elate,
Or pale Urania's deep and starry eyes.
Oh friends, whom chance and change can never
harm
Whom Death the tyrant cannot doom to die
Within whose folding soft eternal charm
I love to lie,
And meditate upon your verse that flows,
And fertilizes wheresoe'er it goes,
Whether . . . .

Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall): An Autobiographical Fragment and Biographical Notes, with Personal Sketches of Contemporaries, Unpublished Lyrics, and Letters of Literary Friends. 1877.

Lord Byron. 1788—1824.

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his.

Don Juan, Canto iii., s. 88.

Dr. Arnott. 1788—1824.

In remote times the inhabitants of the earth were divided into small states or societies, often at enmity among themselves, and whose thoughts and interests were confined much within their own narrow territories and rude habits. In succeeding ages men found themselves belonging to larger communities, as when the English heptarchy became united, or more lately when England, Scotland, and Ireland have become one; but still distant kingdoms and quarters of the world were of no interest to them, and often were totally unknown. Now, however, a man feels that he is a member of one vast more civilized society which covers the face of the earth, and no part of the earth is indifferent to him. In England, for instance, a man of small fortune, nay, even a journeyman mechanic who is honest, sober, and intelligent, may cast his regards around him, and say, with truth and exultation, "I am lodged in a house that affords me conveniences and comforts which some centuries ago even a king could not command. Ships are crossing the seas in every direction to bring what is useful to me from all parts of the earth; in China men are gathering the tea leaf for me, in the West India Islands and elsewhere they are preparing my sugar and my coffee; in America they are cultivating cotton for me; elsewhere they are shearing the sheep to give me abundance of warm clothing; at home powerful steam-engines are spinning and weaving for me and making cutlery, and pumping the mines that minerals useful to me may be procured. My patrimony was small, yet I have railway-trains running day and night on all the roads to carry my correspondence and to bring the coal for my winter fire; nay, I have protecting fleets and armies around my happy country, to render secure my enjoyments and repose. Then I have editors and printers, who daily send me an account of what is going on throughout the world, among these people who serve me. And in a corner of my house I have BOOKS—the miracle of all my possessions, more wonderful than the wishing-cap of the Arabian tales, for they transport me instantly, not only to all places, but to all times. By my books I can conjure up before me to a momentary existence many of the great and good men of past ages, and for my individual satisfaction they seem to act again the most renowned of their achievements; the orators declaim for me, the historians recite, the poets sing." This picture is not overcharged, and might be much extended; such being the goodness and providence which devised this world, that each individual of the civilized millions that cover it, if his conduct be prudent, may have nearly the same happiness as if he were the single lord of all.—*The Elements of Physics.*

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER. 1788—1860.

It is the case with literature as with life; wherever we turn we come upon the incorrigible mob of humankind, whose name is Legion, swarming everywhere, damaging everything, as flies in summer. Hence the multiplicity of bad books, those exuberant weeds of literature which choke the true corn. Such books rob the public of time, money, and attention, which ought properly to belong to good literature and noble aims, and they are written with a view merely to make money or occupation. They are therefore not merely useless, but injurious. Nine-tenths of our current literature has no other end but to inveigle a thaler or two out of the public pocket, for which purpose author, publisher, and printer are leagued together. A more pernicious, subtler, and bolder piece of trickery is that by which penny-a-liners and scribblers succeed in destroying good taste and real culture. . . . Hence, the paramount importance of acquiring the art *not* to read; in other words, of not reading such books as occupy the public mind, or even those which make a noise in the world, and reach several editions in their first and last year of existence. We should recollect that he who writes for fools finds an enormous audience, and we should devote the ever scant leisure of our circumscribed existence to the master-spirits of all ages and nations, those who tower over humanity, and whom the voice of Fame proclaims: only such writers cultivate and instruct us. Of bad books we can never read too little: of the good never too much. The bad are intellectual poison and undermine the understanding. Because people insist on reading not the best books written for all time, but the newest contemporary literature, writers of the day remain in the narrow circle of the same perpetually revolving ideas, and the age continues to wallow in its own mire. . .

N.B.

Mere acquired knowledge belongs to us only like a wooden leg or a wax nose. Knowledge attained by means of thinking resembles our natural limbs, and is the only kind that really belongs to us. Hence the difference between the thinker and the pedant. The intellectual possession of the independent thinker is like a beautiful picture which stands before us, a living thing with fitting light and shadow, sustained tones, perfect harmony of colour. That of the merely learned man may be compared to a palette covered with bright colours, perhaps even arranged with some system, but wanting in harmony, coherence and meaning. . . .

We find in the greater number of works, leaving out the very bad, that their authors have thought, not seen—written from reflection, not intuition. And this is why books are so uniformly mediocre and wearisome. For what an author has thought, the reader can think for himself; but when his thought is based on intuition, it is as if he takes us into a land we have not ourselves visited. All is fresh and new. . . . We discover the quality of a writer's thinking powers after reading a few pages. Before learning what he thinks, we see how he thinks—namely, the texture of his thoughts; and this remains the same, no matter the subject in hand. The style is the stamp of individual intellect, as language is the stamp of race. We throw away a book when we find ourselves in a darker mental region than the one we have just quitted. Only those writers profit us whose understanding is quicker, more lucid than our own, by whose brain we indeed think for a time, who quicken our thoughts, and lead us whither alone we could not find our way.—*Parerga und Paralipomena.*

[Schopenhauer's great work, "The World as Will and Idea" (Welt als Wille und Vorstellung), "the real value of which," he says, "may be discovered in distant times only," has been translated by R. B. Haldane, M.A., and John Kemp, M.A.

JOHN KENYON. 1783—1856.

How oft, at evening, when the mind, o'erwrought,
Finds, in dim reverie, repose from thought,
Just at that hour when soft subsiding day
Slants on the glimmering shelves its latest ray;
Along those darkling files I ponder slow,
And muse, how vast the debt to books we owe.
Yes! friends they are! and friends thro' life to last!
Hopes for the future! memories for the past!
With them, no fear of leisure unemployed;
Let come the leisure, they shall fill the void:
With them, no dread of joys that fade from view;
They stand beside us, and our youth renew;
Telling fond tales of that exalted time,
When lore was bliss, and power was in its prime.
Come then, delicious converse still to hold,
And still to teach, ye long-loved volumes old!

. . . . . .

And sweet 'twill be, or hope would so believe,
When close round life its fading tints of eve,
To turn again our earlier volumes o'er,
And love them then, because we've loved before;
And inly bless the waning hour that brings
A will to lean once more on simple things.

Poems: For the Most Part Occasional.

CHARLES KNIGHT. 1791—1873.

Books are, no doubt, the readiest roads to knowledge, but there may be a great deal of knowledge, and a great deal of taste, without any very extensive acquaintance with books. If I enter the premises of a working-man, and find his garden deformed with weeds—his once latticed porch broken and unseemly—his walls discoloured—his hearth dirty—I know that there is little self-respect in the master of that hovel, and that he flies from his comfortless home to the nightly gratification which the ale-house supplies. But show me the trim crocus in the spring, or the gorgeous dahlia in the autumn, flourishing in his neat enclosure—let me see the vine or the monthly rose covering his cottage-walls in regulated luxuriance—let me find within, the neatly-sanded floor, the well-polished furniture, a few books, and a print or two over his chimney, and I am satisfied that the occupiers of that cottage have a principle at work within them which will do much to keep them from misery and degradation. They have found out unexpensive employments for their leisure; they have the key to the same class of enjoyments which constitute a large portion of the happiness of the best-informed; they have secured a share of the common inheritance of intellectual gratification.—*Speech delivered to the Members of the Windsor and Eton Public Library, Oct.*, 1833.

There are some, no doubt, amongst those whom I have the honour of addressing, who have been familiar long ago with the poetry and the philosophy that has sprung up, and flourished in their own soil, and who, in advancing years, derive new pleasures from their recollection. Those things which were the delight of our jocund days, steal in upon the sober consolations of our waning time—bright images, tender echoes. Memory dwells upon the scenes in which childhood was nourished, and youth walked fearlessly; but it especially dwells upon the enduring productions of mind which were treasured up when our fancies were vivid, and our hopes ardent. Is not this a reason, if any were needed, for asking the young man to familiarize himself with the highest and the purest things that belong to the imagination, to store up the soundest things that are to be imparted by history and philosophy; to seek the companionship, in a word, of the best books. . . . It has been said that mediocrity will be the result of the vast extension of the reading public. I venture to think that the mediocrity of a century ago was the result of the confined space in which the then reading public moved. —*Speech at the Opening of the Sheffield Athenæum, May* 5, 1847.

LORD MAHON (PHILIP HENRY STANHOPE).

1791—1875.

Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, the pleasures of reading deserve most careful cultivation. Other objects which we have in this world, other pleasures which we seek to pursue, depend materially on other circumstances, on the opinion or caprice of others, on the flourishing or depressed state of an interest or a profession, on connections, on friends, on opportunities, on the prevalence of one party or the other in the State. Thus, then, it happens, that without any fault of ours, with regard to objects dear to us, we may be constantly doomed to disappointment. In the pleasure of reading, on the other hand, see how much is at all times within your own power; how little you depend upon any one but yourselves . . . see how little the man who can rely on the pleasures of reading is dependent on the caprice or the will of his fellow-men. See how much there is within his own power and control;—how by reading, if his circumstances have been thwarted by any of the fortuitous events to which I have just referred, how often it is in his power, by these very studies, to better his condition; or, failing in that, how many hours he has in which to obtain oblivion from it, when communing with the great and good of other days. Surely, then, all those who feel—and who does not?—the variety and the vicissitudes of human life, ought, on that very account, if they be wise, to cultivate in themselves, and also to promote in others, an enlightened taste for reading. Of the pleasures of reading I will say, that there is no man so high as to be enabled to dispense with them; and no man so humble who should be compelled to forego them. Rely upon it, that in the highest fortune and the highest station, hours of lassitude and weariness will intrude, unless they be cheered by intellectual occupation. Rely on it, also, that there is no life so toilsome, so devoted to the cares of this world, and to the necessity of providing the daily bread, but what it will afford intervals (if they be only sought out) in which intellectual pleasures may be cultivated and oblivion of other cares enjoyed. Depend upon it that these are pleasures, which he who condemns, will find himself a miserable loser in the end.—*Address to the members of the Manchester Athenæum, November* 11, 1848.

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL. 1792—1871.

There is a want too much lost sight of in our estimate of the privations of the humbler classes, though it is one of the most incessantly craving of all our wants, and is actually the impelling power which, in the vast majority of cases, urges men into vice and crime. It is the want of amusement. . . . Now I would ask, what provision do we find for the cheap and innocent and daily amusements of the mass of the labouring population of this country? What sort of resources have they to call up the cheerfulness of their spirits, and chase away the cloud from their brow after the fatigue of a day's hard work, or the stupefying monotony of some sedentary occupation? Why, really very little—I hardly like to assume the appearance of a wish to rip up grievances by saying *how* little. The pleasant field walk and the village green are becoming rarer and rarer every year. . . . The beer-shop and the public-house, it is true, are always open, and always full, but it is not by *those* institutions that the cause of moral and intellectual culture is advanced. The truth is, that under the pressure of a continually condensing population, the habits of the city have crept into the village—the demands of agriculture have become sterner and more imperious, and while hardly a foot of ground is left uncultivated, and unappropriated, there is positively not space left for many of the cheerful amusements of rural life. . . .

I hold it, therefore, to be a matter of very great consequence, independent of the kindness of the thing—that those who are at their ease in this world should look about and be at some pains to furnish available means of harmless gratification to the industrious and well-disposed classes, who are worse provided for than themselves in every respect, but who, on that very account, are prepared to prize more highly every accession of true enjoyment, and who really want it more. To do so is to hold out a bonus for the withdrawal of a man from mischief in his idle hours—it is to break that strong tie which binds many a one to evil associates and brutal habits—the want of something better to amuse him,—by actually making his abstinence become its own reward.

Now, of all the amusements which can possibly be imagined for a hard-working man, after his daily toil, or in its intervals, there is nothing like reading an entertaining book, supposing him to have a taste for it, and supposing him to have the book to read. It calls for no bodily exertion, of which he has had enough or too much. It relieves his home of its dullness and sameness, which, in nine cases out of ten, is what drives him out to the ale-house, to his own ruin and his family's. It transports him into a livelier, and gayer, and more diversified and interesting scene, and while he enjoys himself there he may forget the evils of the present moment, fully as much as if he were ever so drunk, with the great advantage of finding himself the next day with his money in his pocket, or at least laid out in real necessaries and comforts for himself and his family,—and without a headache. Nay, it accompanies him to his next day's work, and if the book he has been reading be anything above the very idlest and lightest, gives him something to think of besides the mere mechanical drudgery of his every day occupation,—something he can enjoy while absent, and look forward with pleasure to return to.

But supposing him to have been fortunate in the choice of his book, and to have alighted upon one really good and of a good class. What a source of domestic enjoyment is laid open! What a bond of family union! He may read it aloud, or make his wife read it, or his eldest boy or girl, or pass it round from hand to hand. All have the benefit of it—all contribute to the gratification of the rest, and a feeling of common interest and pleasure is excited. Nothing unites people like companionship in intellectual enjoyment. It does more, it gives them mutual respect, and to each among them self-respect — that corner-stone of all virtue. . . .

I recollect an anecdote told me by a late highly-respected inhabitant of Windsor as a fact which he could personally testify, having occurred in a village where he resided several years, and where he actually was at the time it took place. The blacksmith of the village had got hold of Richardson's novel of "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded," and used to read it aloud in the long summer evenings, seated on his anvil, and never failed to have a large and attentive audience. It is a pretty long-winded book—but their patience was fully a match for the author's prolixity, and they fairly listened to it all. At length, when the happy turn of fortune arrived, which brings the hero and heroine together, and sets them living long and happily according to the most approved rules—the congregation were so delighted as to raise a great shout, and procuring the church keys, actually set the parish bells ringing. Now let any one say whether it is easy to estimate the amount of good done in this simple case. Not to speak of the number of hours agreeably and innocently spent —not to speak of the good-fellowship and harmony promoted—here was a whole rustic population fairly won over to the side of good—charmed—and night after night spell-bound within that magic circle which genius can trace so effectually, and compelled to bow before that image of virtue and purity which (though at a great expense of words) no one knew better how to body forth with a thousand life-like touches than the author of that work.

If I were to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. I speak of it of course only as a worldly advantage, and not in the slightest degree as superseding or derogating from the higher office and surer and stronger panoply of religious principles—but as a taste, an instrument and a mode of pleasurable gratification. Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittiest—with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations—a cotemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but the character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating in thought with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of humanity. It is morally impossible but that the manners should take a tinge of good breeding and civilization from having constantly before one's eyes the way in which the best-bred and the best-informed men have talked and conducted themselves in their intercourse with each other. There is a gentle, but perfectly irresistible coercion in a habit of reading well directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct, which is not the less effectual because it works insensibly, and because it is really the last thing he dreams of. It cannot, in short, be better summed up, than in the words of the Latin poet—

> "Emollit mores, nec *sinit* esse feros."

It civilizes the conduct of men—and *suffers* them not to remain barbarous.

The reason why I have dwelt so strongly upon the point of amusement, is this—that it is really the *only* handle, at least the only innocent one, by which we can gain a fair grasp of the attention of those who have grown up in a want of instruction, and in a carelessness of their own improvement. . . . If then we would generate a taste for reading, we must, as our only chance of success, begin by pleasing. And what is more, this must be not only the ostensible, but the *real* object of the works we offer. The listlessness and want of sympathy with which most of the works written expressly for circulation among the labouring classes, are read by them, if read at all, arises mainly from this —that the story told, of the lively or friendly style assumed, is *manifestly* and *palpably* only a cloak for the instruction intended to be conveyed—a sort of gilding of what they cannot well help fancying must be a pill, when they see so much and such obvious pains taken to wrap it up.

But try it on the other tack. Furnish them liberally with books not written expressly for them as a class—but published for their betters (as the phrase is), and those the best of their kind. You will soon find that they have the same feelings to be interested by the varieties of fortune and incident—the same discernment to perceive the shades of character—the same relish for striking contrasts of good and evil in moral conduct, and the same irresistible propensity to take the good side —the same perception of the sublime and beautiful in nature and art, when distinctly placed before them by the touches of a master—and what is most of all to the present purpose, the same desire having once been pleased, to be pleased again. In short, you will find that in the higher and better class of works of fiction and imagination duly circulated, you possess all you require to strike your grappling-iron into their souls, and chain them, willing followers, to the car of advancing civilization. . . .

The novel, in its best form, I regard as one of the most powerful engines of civilization ever invented . . . the novel as it has been put forth by Cervantes and Richardson, by Goldsmith, by Edgeworth, and Scott. In the writings of these and such as these, we have a stock of works in the highest degree enticing and interesting, and of the utmost purity and morality—full of admirable lessons of conduct, and calculated in every respect to create and cherish that invaluable habit of resorting to books for pleasure. Those who have once experienced the enjoyment of such works will not easily learn to abstain from reading, and will not willingly descend to an inferior grade of intellectual privilege—they have become prepared for reading of a higher order—and may be expected to relish the finest strains of poetry, and to draw with advantage from the purest wells of history and philosophy. Nor let it be thought ridiculous or over-strained to associate the idea of poetry, history or philosophy, with the homely garb and penurious fare of the peasant. . . . There is always this advantage in aiming at the highest results—that the failure is never total, and that though the end accomplished may fall far short of that proposed, it cannot but reach far in advance of the point from which we start. There never was any great and permanent good accomplished but by hoping for and aiming at something still greater and better.

A taste for reading once created, there can be little difficulty in directing it to its proper objects. . . .

But the first step necessary to be taken is to set seriously about arousing the dormant appetite by applying the stimulant; to awaken the torpid intellectual being from its state of inaction to a sense of its existence and of its wants. The after-task, to gratify them, and while gratifying to enlarge and improve them, will prove easy in comparison.—*An Address to the Subscribers to the Windsor and Eton Public Library and Reading Room, 29th January*, 1833.

JULIUS C. HARE. 1795—1855.

For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most; and when the difficulties have once been overcome, there are the books which have struck the deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections. . . . Above all, in the present age of light reading, that is of reading hastily, thoughtlessly, indiscriminately, unfruitfully, when most books are forgotten as soon as they are finished, and very many sooner, it is well if something heavier is cast now and then into the midst of the literary public. This may scare and repel the weak, it will rouse and attract the stronger, and increase their strength, by making them exert it. In the sweat of the brow, is the mind as well as the body to eat its bread. *Nil sine magno Musa labore dedit mortalibus.* . . .

Desultory reading is indeed very mischievous, by fostering habits of loose, discontinuous thought, by turning the memory into a common sewer for rubbish of all thoughts to float through, and by relaxing the power of attention, which of all our faculties most needs care, and is most improved by it. But a well-regulated course of study will no more weaken the mind than hard exercise will weaken the body; nor will a strong understanding be weighed down by its knowledge, any more than oak is by its leaves, or than Samson was by his locks. He whose sinews are drained by his hair, must already be a weakling.—*Guesses at Truth.*

THOMAS CARLYLE. 1795—1881.

Excepting one or two individuals, I have little society that I value very highly; but books are a ready and effectual resource. May blessings be upon the head of Cadmus, the Phœnicians, or whoever it was that invented books! I may not detain you with the praises of an art that carries the voice of man to the extremity of the earth and to the latest generations; but it is lawful for the solitary wight to express the love he feels for those companions so steadfast and unpresuming, that go or come without reluctance, and that, when his fellow-animals are proud or stupid or peevish, are ever ready to cheer the languor of his soul, and gild the barrenness of life with the treasures of bygone times.—*Letter to Robert Mitchell (an intimate college-friend), Kirkcaldy, February 16th,* 1818 *(in his 23rd year).*

Yet wherefore should we murmur? A share of evil, greater or less (the difference of shares is not worth mentioning), is the unalterable doom of mortals, and the mind may be taught to abide in peace. Complaint is generally despicable, always worse than unavailing. It is an instructive thing, I think, to observe Lord Byron, surrounded with the voluptuousness of an Italian seraglio, chanting a mournful strain over the wretchedness of human life—and then to contemplate the poor but lofty-minded Epictetus, the slave of a cruel master too; and to hear him lifting up his voice to far distant generations in these unforgotten words. [Quotation from the "Enchiridion" of Epictetus.] But a truce to moralizing; suffice it with our Stoic, to suffer and abstain.—*Letter to Thomas Murray (another intimate friend), Kirkcaldy, 28th July,* 1818.

Do not fear that I shall read you a homily on that hackneyed theme—contentment. Simply I wish to tell you that in days of darkness—for there *are* days when my support (pride, or whatever it is) has enough to do—I find it useful to remember that Cleanthes, whose memorable words may last yet other two thousand years, never murmured when he laboured by night, as a street-porter, that he might hear the lectures of Zeno by day; and that Epictetus, the ill-used slave of a cruel tyrant's as wretched minion, wrote that "Enchiridion" which may fortify the soul of the latest inhabitant of the earth.—*Letter to Robert Mitchell, Kirkcaldy, 6th November,* 1818.

And herein lies the highest merit of a piece, and the proper art of reading it. We have not *read* an author till we have seen his object, whatever it may be, as *he* saw it. Is it a matter of reasoning, and has he reasoned stupidly and falsely? We should understand the circumstances which, to his mind, made it seem true, or persuaded him to write it, knowing that it was not so. In any other way we do him injustice if we judge him. Is it of poetry? His words are so many symbols, to which we ourselves must furnish the interpretation; or they remain, as in all prosaic minds the words of poetry ever do, a dead letter: indications they are, barren in themselves, but, by following which, we also may reach, or approach, that Hill of Vision where the poet stood, beholding the glorious scene which it is the purport of his poem to show others.

A reposing state, in which the Hill were brought under us, not we obliged to mount it, might indeed for the present be more convenient; but, in the end, it could not be equally satisfying. Continuance of passive pleasure, it should never be forgotten, is here, as under all conditions of mortal existence, an impossibility. Everywhere in life, the true question is, not what we *gain*, but what we *do:* so also in intellectual matters, in conversation, in reading, which is more precise and careful conversation, it is not what we *receive*, but what we are made to *give*, that chiefly contents and profits us. True, the mass of readers will object; because, like the mass of men, they are too indolent. But if any one affect, not the active and watchful, but the passive and somnolent line of study, are there not writers expressly fashioned for him, enough and to spare? It is but the smaller number of books that become more instructive by a second perusal: the great majority are as perfectly plain as perfect triteness can make them. Yet, if time is precious, no book that will not improve by repeated readings deserves to be read at all. And were there an artist of a right spirit; a man of wisdom, conscious of his high vocation, of whom we could know beforehand that he had not written without purpose and earnest meditation, that he knew what he had written, and had embodied in it, more or less, the creations of a deep and noble soul,—should we not draw near to him reverently, as disciples to a master; and what task could there be more profitable than to read him as we have described, to study him even to his minutest meanings? For, were not this to think as he had thought, to see with his gifted eyes, to make the very mood and feeling of his great and rich mind the mood also of our poor and little one?—*Miscellaneous Essays: "Goethe's Helena."* 1828.

I thank Heaven I have still a boundless appetite for reading. I have thoughts of lying buried alive here for many years, forgetting all stuff about "reputation," success, and so forth, and resolutely setting myself to gain insight by the only method not shut out from me—that of books. Two articles (of fifty pages) in the year will keep me living; employment in that kind is open enough. For the rest, I really find almost that I do *best* when *forgotten* by men, and nothing above or around me but the imperishable Heaven. It never wholly seems to me that I am to die in this wilderness; a feeling is always dimly with me that I am to be called out of it, and have work fit for me before I depart, the rather as I can do *either way*. Let not solitude, let not silence and unparticipating isolation make a savage of thee—these, too, have their advantages.—*Journal, Craigenputtock, September 3rd,* 1832. *(See Froude's Life of Carlyle, vol.* ii., *p.* 309.)

No book, I believe, except the Bible, has been so universally read and loved by Christians of all tongues and sects as Thomas à Kempis' "De Imitatione Christi." It gives me pleasure to think that the Christian heart of our good mother may also derive nourishment and strength from what has already nourished and strengthened so many. [He had sent his mother a copy of the book in February, 1833.]—*Froude's Life of Carlyle, vol.* ii., *p.* 337.

"Visible and tangible products of the past, again, I reckon up to the extent of three: Cities, with their cabinets and arsenals; their tilled Fields, to either or to both of which divisions roads with their bridges may belong; and thirdly——Books. In which third, truly, the last invented, lies a worth far surpassing that of the two others. Wondrous indeed is the virtue of a true book! Not like a dead city of stones, yearly crumbling, yearly needing repair; more like a tilled field, but then a spiritual field; like a spiritual tree, let me rather say, it stands from year to year, and from age to age (we have books that already number some hundred and fifty human ages); and yearly comes its new produce of leaves (commentaries, deductions, philosophical, political systems; or were it only sermons, pamphlets, journalistic essays), every one of which is talismanic and thaumaturgic, for it can persuade men. O thou who art able to write a book, which once in the two centuries or oftener there is a man gifted to do, envy not him whom they name city-builder, and inexpressibly pity him whom they name conqueror or city-burner! Thou, too, art a conqueror and victor; but of the true sort, namely, over the Devil. Thou, too, hast built what will outlast all marble and metal, and be a wonder-bringing city of the mind, a temple and seminary and prophetic mount, whereto all kindreds of the earth will pilgrim."—*Sartor Resartus*, 1833.

Our pious Fathers, feeling well what importance lay in the speaking of man to men, founded churches, made endowments, regulations; everywhere in the civilised world there is a Pulpit, environed with all manner of complex dignified appurtenances and furtherances, that therefrom a man with the tongue may, to best advantage, address his fellow-men. They felt that this was the most important thing; that without this there was no good thing. It is a right pious work, that of theirs; beautiful to behold! But now with the art of Writing, with the art of Printing, a total change has come over that business. The Writer of a Book, is not he a Preacher preaching not to this parish or that, on this day or that, but to all men in all times and places? . . .

Certainly the Art of Writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised. Odin's *Runes* were the first form of the work of a Hero; *Books*, written words, are still miraculous *Runes*, the latest form! In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. Mighty fleets and armies, harbours and arsenals, vast cities, high-domed, many-engined,—they are precious, great: but what do they become? Agamemnon, the many Agamemnons, Pericleses, and their Greece; all is gone now to some ruined fragments, dumb mournful wrecks and blocks: but the Books of Greece! There Greece, to every thinker, still very literally lives; can be called-up again into life. No magic *Rune* is stranger than a Book. All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

Do not Books still accomplish *miracles* as *Runes* were fabled to do? They persuade men. Not the wretchedest circulating-library novel, which foolish girls thumb and con in remote villages, but will help to regulate the actual practical weddings and households of those foolish girls. So "Celia" felt, so "Clifford" acted: the foolish Theorem of Life, stamped into those young brains, comes out as a solid Practice one day. Consider whether any *Rune* in the wildest imagination of Mythologist ever did such wonders as, on the actual firm Earth, some Books have done! What built St. Paul's Cathedral? Look at the heart of the matter, it was that divine Hebrew BOOK,—the word partly of the man Moses, an outlaw tending his Midianitish herds, four thousand years ago, in the wildernesses of Sinai! It is the strangest of things, yet nothing is truer. With the Art of Writing, of which Printing is a simple, an inevitable and comparatively insignificant corollary, the true reign of miracles for mankind commenced. It related, with a wondrous new contiguity and perpetual closeness, the Past and Distant with the Present in time and place; all times and all places with this our actual Here and Now. All things were altered for men; all modes of important work of men: teaching, preaching, governing and all else. . . .

Once invent Printing, you metamorphosed all Universities, or superseded them! The Teacher needed not now to gather men personally round him, that he might *speak* to them what he knew; print it in a Book, and all learners, far and wide, for a trifle, had it each at his own fireside, much more effectually to learn it! . . . If we think of it, all that a University, or final highest School can do for us, is still but what the first School began doing,—teach us to *read*. We learn to *read*, in various languages, in various sciences; we learn the alphabet and letters of all manner of Books. But the place where we are to get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge, is the Books themselves! It depends on what we read, after all manner of Professors have done their best for us. The true University of these days is a Collection of Books. . . .

Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere, that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here, as everywhere.

I many a time say, the writers of Newspapers, Pamphlets, Poems, Books, these *are* the real working effective Church of a modern country. Nay not only our preaching, but even our worship, is not it too accomplished by means of Printed Books? The noble sentiment which a gifted soul has clothed for us in melodious words, which brings melody into our hearts, —is not this essentially, if we will understand it, of the nature of worship? There are many, in all countries, who, in this confused time, have no other method of worship. He who, in any way, shows us better than we knew before that a lily of the fields is beautiful, does he not show it us as an effluence of the Fountain of all Beauty; as the *handwriting*, made visible there, of the great Maker of the Universe? He has sung for us, made us sing with him a little verse of a sacred Psalm. Essentially so. How much more he who sings, who says, or in any way brings home to our heart the noble doings, feelings, darings and endurances of a brother man! He has verily touched our hearts as with a live coal *from the altar*. Perhaps there is no worship more authentic. . . .

On all sides, are we not driven to the conclusion that, of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful and worthy are the things we call Books! Those poor bits of rag-paper with black ink on them;—from the Daily Newspaper to the sacred Hebrew BOOK, what have they not done, what are they not doing!—For indeed, whatever be the outward form of the thing (bits of paper, as we say, and black ink), is it not verily, at bottom, the highest act of man's faculty that produces a Book? It is the *Thought* of man; the true thaumaturgic virtue; by which man works all things whatsoever. All that he does, and brings to pass, is the vesture of a Thought. This London City, with all its houses, palaces, steam engines, cathedrals, and huge immeasurable traffic and tumult, what is it but a Thought, but millions of Thoughts made into One; —a huge immeasurable Spirit of a THOUGHT, embodied in brick, in iron, smoke, dust, Palaces, Parliaments, Hackney Coaches, Katherine Docks, and the rest of it! Not a brick was made but some man had to *think* of the making of that brick.—The thing we called "bits of paper with traces of black ink," is the *purest* embodiment a Thought of man can have. No wonder it is, in all ways, the activest and noblest.

If a book come from the heart, it will contrive to reach other hearts; all art and author-craft are of small account to that.—*Lectures on Heroes: "The Hero as Man of Letters."* 1840.

Possibly too you may have heard it said that the course of centuries has changed all this; and that "the true University of our days is a Collection of Books." And beyond doubt, all this is greatly altered by the invention of Printing, which took place about midway between us and the origin of Universities. Men have not now to go in person to where a Professor is actually speaking; because in most cases you can get his doctrine out of him through a book; and can then read it, and read it again and again, and study it. That is an immense change, that one fact of Printed Books. And I am not sure that I know of any University in which the whole of that fact has yet been completely taken in, and the studies moulded in complete conformity with it. . . .

It remains, however, practically a most important truth, what I alluded to above, that the main use of

Universities in the present age is that, after you have done with all your classes, the next thing is a collection of books, a great library of good books, which you proceed to study and to read. What the Universities can mainly do for you,—what I have found the University did for me, is, That it taught me to read, in various languages, in various sciences ; so that I could go into the books which treated of these things, and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me.

Whatever you may think of these historical points, the clearest and most imperative duty lies on every one of you to be assiduous in your reading. Learn to be good readers,—which is perhaps a more difficult thing than you imagine. Learn to be discriminative in your reading; to read faithfully, and with your best attention, all kinds of things which you have a real interest in, a real not an imaginary, and which you find to be really fit for what you are engaged in. . . . The most unhappy of all men is the man who cannot tell what he is going to do, who has got no work cut-out for him in the world, and does not go into it. For work is the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind,—honest work, which you intend getting done. . . .

I do not know whether it has been sufficiently brought home to you that there are two kinds of books. When a man is reading on any kind of subject, in most departments of books,—in all books, if you take it in a wide sense,—he will find that there is a division into good books and bad books. Everywhere a good kind of book and a bad kind of book. I am not to assume that you are unacquainted, or ill-acquainted with this plain fact; but I may remind you that it is becoming a very important consideration in our day. And we have to cast aside altogether the idea people have, that if they are reading any book, that if an ignorant man is reading any book, he is doing rather better than nothing at all. I must entirely call that in question; I even venture to deny that. It would be much safer and better for many a reader, that he had no concern with books at all. There is a number, a frightfully increasing number, of books that are decidedly, to the readers of them, not useful. But an ingenious reader will learn, also, that a certain number of books were written by a supremely noble kind of people, —not a very great number of books, but still a number fit to occupy all your reading industry, do adhere more or less to that side of things. In short, as I have written it down somewhere else, I conceive that books are like men's souls; divided into sheep and goats. Some few are going up, and carrying us up, heavenward; calculated, I mean, to be of priceless advantage in teaching,—in forwarding the teaching of all generations. Others, a frightful multitude, are going down, down; doing ever the more and the wider and the wilder mischief. Keep a strict eye on that latter class of books, my young friends!—And for the rest, in regard to all your studies and readings here, and to whatever you may learn, you are to remember that the object is not particular knowledges,—not that of getting higher and higher in technical perfections, and all that sort of thing. There is a higher aim lying at the rear of all that, especially among those who are intended for literary or speaking pursuits, or the sacred profession. You are ever to bear in mind that there lies behind that the acquisition of what may be called wisdom;—namely, sound appreciation and just decision as to all the objects that come round you, and the habit of behaving with justice, candour, clear insight, and loyal adherence to fact.—*Rectorial Address at Edinburgh, 2nd April,* 1866.

CARLYLE'S STYLE.

"With a little labour, it is true, we have become reconciled to it, and we can tell every reader that it is worth some labour. . . . Every original thing must speak its own language. Consider the work ('The French Revolution') as much a poem as a history—consider it as the intense outpouring of the heart of a great thinker made in the manner of a soliloquy as of one thinking aloud—do anything that will reconcile you to a style which is at first very strange and unusual—reckon it worth some labour, and be content to make some sacrifice of leisure and of taste—rather than throw down one of the most remarkable books of our age in ignorant, short-sighted disgust. We repeat that we wish the style altered in many places, as in matters of quiet and level consideration; but in the major portion of the book, we would not have the alteration of a word. It is the very language of the season and the men—rivetting breathless attention, and stirring the deepest yearnings of the affections. The finest eloquence or the most ruthless logic relieves in their proper seasons the grotesque, the pathetic, the ludicrous, or the horrible.—*Albany Fonblanque, in "London Examiner," September* 17, 1837.

What looks like affected singularity in Mr. Carlyle's style is the natural effect of his position. The strange language which he uses is used because it is the way in which he finds it natural to express the extreme depth, earnestness, and vivacity of his own feelings on the topics on which he writes. It is only by the use of humour and paradox that he can give full scope to his feelings. It is by these means alone that he can show how much he is in earnest, and that he can venture to introduce those occasional bursts of passion into his writings which form so prominent a feature in them. . . . Mr. Carlyle's writings almost always suggest that whatever strangeness there may be in his style was put there not by Mr. Carlyle himself, with a view to make an impression, but because that was the way in which the facts presented themselves to his mind. . . . His style is the genuine expression of the mind and character of the author, though it retains tricks which certainly deform it, but which, after a certain time, a judicious reader becomes used to, and allows for. After all, the singularities of Mr. Carlyle's style form a very small part of it. . . . After allowing for much which might be brushed away without altering the substance of his works, what remains is a style in some respects, of almost unequalled excellence. It is admirable for every purpose of description—nervous, natural, and vivid, to a degree which cannot be exaggerated.—*J. A. Froude, Fraser's Magazine, vol.* lxxii., *p.* 786.

His peculiarities of style have been the subject of pedantic horror and of disgusting imitation, but the result of them is *unique.—George Saintsbury.*

THOMAS ARNOLD. 1795—1842.

Keep your view of men and things extensive, and depend upon it that a mixed knowledge is not a superficial one. As far as it goes, the views that it gives are true; but he who reads deeply one class of writers only, gets views which are almost sure to be perverted, and which are not only narrow but false. Adjust your proposed amount of reading to your time and inclination; but whether that amount be large or small, let it be varied in its kind, and widely varied. If I have a confident opinion on any one point connected with the improvement of the human mind it is on this.—*Stanley's Life of Arnold: Letter to C. J. Vaughan.*

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD. 1795—1854.

How important then is it, that throughout our land, but more especially here where all the greatest of the material instruments have their triumphant home, the spiritual agencies should be quickened into kindred activity; that the brief minutes of leisure and repose which may be left us should become hours of that true time which is dialled in heaven. . . . The solitary leisure of the clerk, of the shopman, of the apprentice, of the overseer, of every worker in all departments of labour, from the highest to the lowest, shall be gladdened, at will, by those companions to whom the "serene creators of immortal things," in verse and prose, have given him perpetual introduction, and who will never weary, or betray, or forsake him.—*Speech at the Manchester Athenæum, October* 23, 1845.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE. 1796—1849.

Books, no less than their authors, are liable to get ragged, and to experience that neglect and contempt which generally follows the outward and visible signs of poverty. We do therefore most heartily commend the man, who bestows on a tattered and shivering volume, such decent and comely apparel, as may protect it from the insults of the vulgar, and the more cutting slights of the fair. But if it be a rare book, "the lone survivor of a numerous race," the one of its family that has escaped the trunk-makers and pastry-cooks, we would counsel a little extravagance in arraying it. Let no book perish, unless it be such an one as it is your duty to throw into the fire. There is no such thing as a worthless book, though there are some far worse than worthless; no book which is not worth preserving, if its existence may be tolerated; as there are some men whom it may be proper to hang, but none who should be suffered to starve. To *reprint* books that do not rise to a certain pitch of worth, is foolish. It benefits nobody so much as it injures the possessors of the original copies. It is like a new coinage of Queen Anne's farthings. That any thing is in being, is a presumptive reason that it should remain in being, but not that it should be multiplied.

The binding of a book should always suit its complexion. Pages, venerably yellow, should not be cased in military morocco, but in sober brown Russia. Glossy hot pressed paper looks best in vellum. We have sometimes seen a collection of old whitey-brown black letter ballads, &c., so gorgeously tricked out, that they remind us of the pious liberality of the Catholics, who dress in silk and gold the images of saints, part of whose saintship consisted in wearing rags and hair-cloth. The costume of a volume should also be in keeping with its subject, and with the character of its author. How absurd to see the works of William Pen, in flaming scarlet, and George Fox's Journal in Bishop's purple! Theology should be solemnly gorgeous. History should be ornamented after the antique or gothic fashion. Works of science, as plain as is consistent with dignity. Poetry, *simplex munditiis.—Biographia Borealis; or Lives of Distinguished Northerns:* " *William Roscoe.*"

CONNOP THIRLWALL. 1797—1875.

I flatter myself that I can sympathise with your enjoyment of a quiet day. A life of constant society would to me be perfectly intolerable, while I was never yet tired by what is called solitude (being indeed some of the choicest society to one who likes a book).

Nobody can be more interested in the correctness of Dr. ——'s views on reading than myself.

My practice is quite the reverse of his. My reading covers a pretty large area, but at many points is very superficial, and, therefore, I am not an impartial judge. I cannot, however, assent to his opinion—as you state it. But if the maxim runs, "Better read one good book eight times than many once," I should need to know something more about the *many*. Are they supposed to be also *good?* And if so, on the same or different subjects? I should quite agree that it is better to study one good book on any subject accurately than to hurry through many, even though equally good, on the same subject. But if, after I had read one book seven times, the question was whether I should give it an eighth reading or should skim over the work of another writer, though of inferior merit, on the same subject, I should have no doubt that my knowledge of the subject and my capacity of judging would be more enlarged by a hasty perusal of the new book, and that I should understand the first better than if I read it again. I suspect that a man of one or very few books may be familiar with their contents, but be little the better for them for want of means of comparing different views with one another.

A person who was a very great reader and hard thinker told me that he never took up a book except with the view of making himself master of some subject which he was studying, and that while he was so engaged he made all his reading converge to that point. In this way he might read parts of many books, but not a single one "from end to end." This I take to be an excellent method of study, but one which implies the command of many books as well as of much leisure.

It must, however, be remembered that *superficial* is a relative term. There is hardly a department, however narrow, in the whole range of human knowledge that is not absolutely unfathomable and inexhaustible, and its chief adepts would be the first to own or proclaim that no human life is long enough to make any one completely master of it. This holds not only with regard to the higher ologies—theology, philology, physiology, geology, zoology, &c.—but even to their minutest ramifications. Lives, I believe, have been spent and may be spent on such pursuits as numismatics and heraldry, which are branches of history, and involve a great extent of historical reading; but I also believe that the same may be said of some of the minutest compartments of animal and vegetable life. The study can never be exhausted. But would a life be well spent in the acquisition of a relatively profound knowledge of beetles or grasses, or coins or blazonry, to the exclusion of everything else?—*Letters to a Friend, by Connop Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's.*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. 1792—1822.

With deathless minds which leave where they have past
A path of light, my soul communion knew;
Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,
As from a mine of magic store, I drew
Words which were weapons; round my heart there grew
The adamantine armour of their power,
And from my fancy wings of golden hue
Sprang forth.

Revolt of Islam, Canto 2, *Stanza* xx.

That hoary man had spent his lifelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed.

Ibid., Canto 4, *Stanza* viii.

THOMAS HOOD. 1798—1845.

A natural turn for reading and intellectual pursuits probably preserved me from the moral shipwreck so apt to befall those who are deprived in early life of the paternal pilotage. At the least my books kept me from the ring, the dog-pit, the tavern, the saloon, with their degrading orgies. For the closet associate of Pope and Addison, the mind accustomed to the noble though silent discourse of Shakespeare and Milton, will hardly seek or put up with low company and slang. Later experience enables me to depose to the comfort and blessing that literature can prove in seasons of sickness or sorrow—how powerfully intellectual pursuits can help in keeping the head from crazing, and the heart from breaking—nay, not to be too grave, how generous mental food can even atone for too meagre diet—rich fare on the paper for short commons on the cloth. . . . Many, many a dreary, weary hour have I got over—many a gloomy misgiving postponed—many a mental or bodily annoyance forgotten, by help of the tragedies and comedies of our dramatists and novelists! Many a trouble has been soothed by the still small voice of the moral philosopher—many a dragon-like care charmed to sleep by the sweet song of the poet; for all which I cry incessantly, not aloud, but in my heart, thanks and honour to the glorious masters of the pen, and the great inventors of the press!—*Letter to the Secretary of the Manchester Athenæum, July* 18, 1843 *(written from his bed).*

A. Bronson Alcott. *b.* 1799.

Good books, like good friends, are few and chosen; the more select the more enjoyable; and like these are approached with diffidence, nor sought too familiarly nor too often, having the precedence only when friends tire. The most mannerly of companions, accessible at all times, in all moods, they frankly declare the author's mind, without giving offence. Like living friends they too have their voice and physiognomies, and their company is prized as old acquaintances. We seek them in our need of counsel or of amusement, without impertinence or apology, sure of having our claims allowed. A good book justifies our theory of personal supremacy, keeping this fresh in the memory and perennial. What were days without such fellowship? We were alone in the world without it. Nor does our faith falter though the secret we search for and do not find in them will not commit itself to literature, still we take up the new issue with the old expectation, and again and again, as we try our friends after many failures at conversation, believing this visit will be the favored hour and all will be told us. Nor do I know what book I can well spare, certainly none that has admitted me, though it be but for the moment and by the most oblique glimpse, into the mind and personality of its author; though few there are that prefer such friendly claim to one's regard, and satisfy expectation as he turns their leaves. Our favorites are few; since only what rises from the heart reaches it, being caught and carried on the tongues of men wheresoever love and letters journey.

Nor need we wonder at their scarcity or the value we set upon them; life, the essence of good letters as of friendship, being its own best biographer, the artist that portrays the persons and thoughts we are, and are becoming. And the most that even he can do, is but a chance stroke or two at this fine essence housed in the handsome dust, but too fugitive and coy to be caught and held fast for longer than the passing glance; the master touching ever and retouching the picture he leaves unfinished.

"My life has been the poem I would have writ,
But I could not both live and utter it."

. . . Any library is an attraction. And there is an indescribable delight—who has not felt it that deserves the name of scholar—in mousing at choice among the alcoves of antique book-shops especially, and finding the oldest of these sometimes newest of the new, fresher, more suggestive than the book just published and praised in the reviews. And the pleasure scarcely less of cutting the leaves of the new volume, opening by preference at the end rather than title-page, and seizing the author's conclusions at a glance. Very few books repay the reading in course. Nor can we excuse an author if his page does not tempt us to copy passages into our common places, for quotation, proverbs, meditation, or other uses. A good book is fruitful of other books; it perpetuates its fame from age to age, and makes eras in the lives of its readers.—*Tablets:* "*Books.*"

Next to a friend's discourse, no morsel is more delicious than a ripe book, a book whose flavor is as refreshing at the thousandth tasting as at the first. Books when friends weary, conversation flags, or nature fails to inspire. The best books appeal to the deepest in us and answer the demand. A book loses if wanting the personal element, gains when this is insinuated, or comes to the front occasionally, blending history with mythology.

My favorite books have a personality and complexion as distinctly drawn as if the author's portrait were framed into the paragraphs and smiled upon me as I read his illustrated pages. Nor could I spare them from my table or shelves, though I should not open the leaves for a twelve-month ;—the sight of them, the knowledge that they are within reach, accessible at any moment, rewards me when I invite their company. Borrowed books are not mine while in hand. I covet ownership in the contents, and fancy that he who is conversant with these is the rightful owner, and moreover, that the true scholar owes to scholars a catalogue of his chosen volumes, that they may learn from whence his entertainment during leisure moments. Next to a personal introduction, a list of one's favourite authors were the best admittance to his character and manners. . . .

Without Plutarch, no library were complete. Can we marvel at his fame, or overestimate the surpassing merits of his writings? It seems as I read as if none before, none since, had written lives, as if he alone were entitled to the name of biographer,—such intimacy of insight is his, laying open the springs of character, and through his parallels portraying his times as no historian had done before. . . . It is good exercise, good medicine, the reading of his books,—good for to-day, as in times it was preceding ours, salutary reading for all times.

Montaigne also comes in for a large share of the scholar's regard. Opened anywhere, his page is sensible, marrowy, quotable. He may be taken up, too, and laid aside carelessly without loss, so inconsequent is his method, and he so careless of his wealth. Professing nature and honesty of speech, his page has the suggestions of the landscape, is good for striking out in any direction, suited to any mood, sure of yielding variety of information, wit, entertainment,—not to be commended, to be sure, without grave abatements, to be read with good things growing side by side with things not such and tasting of the apple. Still, with every abatement, his book is one of the ripest and mellowist, and, bulky as it is, we wish there were more of it. He seems almost the only author whose success warrants in every stroke of his pen his right to guide it; he of the men of letters, the prince of letters; since writing of life, he omits nothing of its substance, but tells all with a courage unprecedented. His frankness is charming. So his book has indescribable attractions, being as it were a Private Book,—his diary self-edited, and offered with an honesty that wins his readers, he never having done bestowing his opulent hospitalities on him, gossiping sagely, and casting his wisdom in sport to any who care for it. Everywhere his page is alive and rewarding, and we are disappointed at finding his book comes to an end like other books.—*Concord Days:* "*Books.*"

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

1800—1859.

There is scarcely any delusion which has a better claim to be indulgently treated than that under the influence of which a man ascribes every moral excellence to those who have left imperishable monuments of their genius. The causes of this error lie deep in the inmost recesses of human nature. We are all inclined to judge of others as we find them. Our estimate of a character always depends much on the manner in which that character affects our own interests and passions. We find it difficult to think well of those by whom we are thwarted or depressed; and we are ready to admit every excuse for the vices of those who are useful or agreeable to us. This is, we believe, one of those illusions to which the whole human race is subject, and which experience and reflection can only partially remove. It is, in the phraseology of Bacon, one of the *idola tribus*. Hence it is that the moral character of a man eminent in letters or in the fine arts is treated often by contemporaries, almost always by posterity, with extraordinary tenderness. The world derives pleasure and advantage from the performances of such a man. The number of those who suffer by his personal vices is small, even in his own time, when compared with the number of those to whom his talents are a source of gratification. In a few years all those whom he has injured disappear. But his works remain, and are a source of delight to millions. The genius of Sallust is still with us. But the Numidians whom he plundered, and the unfortunate husbands who caught him in their houses at unseasonable hours, are forgotten. We suffer ourselves to be delighted by the keenness of Clarendon's observation, and by the sober majesty of his style, till we forget the oppressor and the bigot in the historian. Falstaff and Tom Jones have survived the gamekeepers whom Shakspeare cudgelled, and the landladies whom Fielding bilked. A great writer is the friend and benefactor of his readers; and they cannot but judge of him under the deluding influence of friendship and gratitude. We all know how unwilling we are to admit the truth of any disgraceful story about a person whose society we like, and from whom we have received favours; how long we struggle against evidence, how fondly, when the facts cannot be disputed, we cling to the hope that there may be some explanation or some extenuating circumstance with which we are unacquainted. Just such is the feeling which a man of liberal education naturally entertains towards the great minds of former ages. The debt which he owes to them is incalculable. They have guided him to truth. They have filled his mind with noble and graceful images. They have stood by him in all vicissitudes, comforters in sorrow, nurses in sickness, companions in solitude. These friendships are exposed to no danger from the occurrences by which other attachments are weakened or dissolved. Time glides on; fortune is inconstant; tempers are soured; bonds which seemed indissoluble are daily sundered by interest, by emulation, or by caprice. But no such cause can affect the silent converse which we hold with the highest of human intellects. That placid intercourse is disturbed by no jealousies or resentments. These are the old friends who are never seen with new faces, who are the same in wealth and in poverty, in glory and in obscurity. With the dead there is no rivalry. In the dead there is no change. Plato is never sullen. Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthenes never comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long. No difference of political opinion can alienate Cicero. No heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet.—*Critical and Historical Essays: "Lord Bacon."*

Compare the literary acquirements of the great men of the thirteenth century with those which will be within the reach of many who will frequent our reading room. As to Greek learning, the profound man of the thirteenth century was absolutely on a par with the superficial man of the nineteenth. In the modern languages, there was not, six hundred years ago, a single volume which is now read. The library of our profound scholar must have consisted entirely of Latin books. We will suppose him to have had both a large and a choice collection. We will allow him thirty, nay forty manuscripts, and among them a Virgil, a Terence, a Lucan, an Ovid, a Statius, a great deal of Livy, a great deal of Cicero. In allowing him all this, we are dealing most liberally with him; for it is much more likely that his shelves were filled with treatises on school divinity and canon law, composed by writers whose names the world has very wisely forgotten. But, even if we suppose him to have possessed all that is most valuable in the literature of Rome, I say with perfect confidence that, both in respect of intellectual improvement, and in respect of intellectual pleasures, he was far less favourably situated than a man who now, knowing only the English language, has a bookcase filled with the best English works. Our great man of the Middle Ages could not form any conception of any tragedy approaching Macbeth or Lear, or of any comedy equal to Henry the Fourth or Twelfth Night. The best epic poem that he had read was far inferior to the Paradise Lost; and all the tomes of his philosophers were not worth a page of the Novum Organum.

. . . . . .

A large part of what is best worth knowing in ancient literature, and in the literature of France, Italy, Germany, and Spain, has been translated into our own tongue. It is scarcely possible that the translation of any book of the highest class can be equal to the original. But, though the finer touches may be lost in the copy, the great outlines will remain. An Englishman who never saw the frescoes in the Vatican may yet, from engravings, form some notion of the exquisite grace of Raphael, and of the sublimity and energy of Michael Angelo. And so the genius of Homer is seen in the poorest version of the Iliad; the genius of Cervantes is seen in the poorest version of Don Quixote. Let it not be supposed that I wish to dissuade any person from studying either the ancient languages or the languages of modern Europe. Far from it. I prize most highly those keys of knowledge; and I think that no man who has leisure for study ought to be content until he possesses several of them. I always much admired a saying of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. "When I learn a new language," he said, "I feel as if I had got a new soul."—*Speech delivered at the Opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institute, November* 4, 1846.

I still retain (not only undiminished, but strengthened by the very events which have deprived me of everything else,) my thirst for knowledge; my passion for holding converse with the greatest minds of all ages and nations; my power of forgetting what surrounds me, of living with the past, the future, and the unreal. Books are becoming everything to me. If I had at this moment my choice of life, I would bury myself in one of those immense libraries that we saw together at the universities, and would never pass a waking hour without a book before me.—*Letter to his Sister. Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Macaulay," vol.* i., *p.* 395.

Thank you for your very pretty letter. I am always glad to make my little girl happy, and nothing pleases me so much as to see that she likes books. For when she is as old as I am, she will find that they are better than all the tarts, and cakes, and toys, and plays, and sights in the world. If anybody would make me the greatest king that ever lived, with palaces and gardens, and fine dinners, and wine and coaches, and beautiful clothes, and hundreds of servants, on condition that I would not read books, I would not be a king—I would rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books, than a king who did not love reading.—*Letter to his Niece. Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Macaulay," vol.* ii., *p.* 207.

William Chambers. 1800—1883.

I was now to have an opportunity of learning practically how far my weekly earnings as a bookseller's apprentice would go in defraying the cost of board and lodging. In short, at little above fourteen years of age, I was thrown on my own resources. From necessity, not less than from choice, I resolved at all hazards to make the weekly four shillings serve for everything. I cannot remember entertaining the slightest despondency on the subject. . . . As favourable for carrying out my aims at an independent style of living, I had the good-fortune to be installed in the dwelling of a remarkably precise and honest widow, a Peebles woman, who, with two grown-up sons, occupied the top story of a building in the West Port. My landlady had the reputation of being excessively parsimonious, but as her honesty was of importance to one in my position, and as she consented to let me have a bed, cook for me, and allow me to sit by her fireside—the fire, by the way, not being much to speak of—for the reasonable charge of eighteenpence a week, I was thought to be lucky in finding her disposed to receive me within her establishment. To her dwelling, therefore, I repaired with my all, consisting of a few articles of clothing and two or three books, including a pocket Bible—the whole contained in a small blue-painted box, which I carried on my shoulder along the Grassmarket.

. . . . . .

I made such attempts as were at all practicable, while an apprentice, to remedy the defects of my education at school. Nothing in that way could be done in the shop, for there reading was proscribed. But allowed to take home a book for study, I gladly availed myself of the privilege. The mornings in summer, when light cost nothing, were my chief reliance. Fatigued with trudging about, I was not naturally inclined to rise, but on this and some other points I overruled the will, and forced myself to get up at five o'clock, and have a spell at reading until it was time to think of moving off—my brother, when he was with me, doing the same. In this way I made some progress in French, with the pronunciation of which I was already familiar from the speech of the French prisoners of war at Peebles. I likewise dipped into several books of solid worth—such as Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Locke's *Human Understanding*, Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, and Blair's *Belles-Lettres*—fixing the leading facts and theories in my memory by a note-book for the purpose. In another book, I kept for years an accurate account of my expenses, not allowing a single halfpenny to escape record.

. . . . . .

In the winter of 1815-16, when the cold and cost of candle-light would have detained me in bed, I was so fortunate as to discover an agreeable means of spending my mornings. . . . From this hopeful personage, whom it was my duty to look after, I one day had a proposition, which he had been charged to communicate. If I pleased, he would introduce me to his occasional employer, the baker in Canal Street, who, he said, was passionately fond of reading, but without leisure for its gratification. If I would go early—very early—say five o'clock in the morning, and read aloud to him and his two sons, while they were preparing their batch, I should be regularly rewarded for my trouble with a penny roll newly drawn from the oven. . . . Behold me, then, quitting my lodgings in the West Port, before five o'clock in the winter mornings, and pursuing my way across the town to the cluster of sunk streets below the North Bridge, of which Canal Street was the principal. The scene of operations was a cellar of confined dimensions, reached by a flight of steps descending from the street, and possessing a small back window immediately beyond the baker's kneading board. Seated on a folded-up sack in the sole of the window, with a book in one hand and a penny candle stuck in a bottle near the other, I went to work for the amusement of the company. The baker was not particular as to subject. All he stipulated for was something droll and laughable. Aware of his tastes, I tried him first with the jocularities of *Roderick Random*, which was a great success, and produced shouts of laughter. I followed this up with other works of Smollett, also with the novels of Fielding, and with *Gil Blas;* the tricks and grotesque rogueries in this last-mentioned work of fiction giving the baker and his two sons unqualified satisfaction. My services as a reader for two and a half hours every morning were unfailingly recompensed by a donation of the anticipated roll, with which, after getting myself brushed of the flour, I went on my way to shop-opening, lamp-cleaning, and all the rest of it, at Calton Street.—*Memoir of Robert Chambers; with Autobiographic Reminiscences of William Chambers.*

JAMES CROSSLEY (LATE PRESIDENT OF THE CHEETHAM SOCIETY). 1800—1883.

Who is not delighted to meet in a place utterly barren and unpromising, with something akin to his habits, and congenial to his pursuits? . . . To know what pleasure is, we ought to meet with the thing, which, of all others, we most want, in the place, where, of all others, we least expect to find it. . . . We were led into these speculations by a late visit to the library, founded by Humphrey Cheetham, in Manchester; a venerable institution, rendered more striking, by presenting somewhat of the appearance of a college, amidst the hurry and business of a large manufacturing town. It is pleasing to pass from the noise and dissonance of a crowded street, into the comparatively still and silent court of a spacious antique mansion, with low-browed roofs, and narrow windows, apparently of the architecture of the time of James the First, where the only habitants seem to be a little population of boys, in their grotesque liveries, according well with their ancient domicile. To feel that there is such a place amidst warehouses, factories, and shops, is some satisfaction, as it shows you are not completely immersed in trade and calculation, but that there is still amidst wool shops, and cotton rooms, a little zoar set apart for better things. As you enter the door leading towards the library, from the court on the left, you are struck with a spacious and lofty hall—whose appearance reminds you of ancient feasts, and old English hospitality—which is now appropriated as the dining room of the children, who are educated by the bounty of the founder. You proceed up a flight of stone stairs to the library, where the books are disposed in compartments, secured by wires from the encroachments of the profane. . . .

There is something very substantial in the appearance of a library of this description. . . . All within it contributes to withdraw us to the past. The mind is left here to resign itself to its own fancies without being recalled by some startling incongruity to the recollections of the present; and for aught which strikes us in the rapidity of a first impression, we might imagine it the spot where Bacon was accustomed to study, and Raleigh delighted to muse. It is impossible to enter a large library, especially when in appearance so antique as the one of which we are now writing, without feeling an inward sensation of reverence, and without catching some sparks of noble emulation, from the mass of mind which is scattered around you. The very dullest, and least intellectual of the sons of earth, must be conscious of the high and lofty society into which he is intruding; a society which no combination of living talent can ever hope to parallel. . . . We feel, as we reverence the mighty spirits around us, that we are in some sort their brothers; and the very homage which we pay to their majesty is itself the bond of our alliance. . . .

The works around us naturally bring their authors before our eye. We can see Hooker in his quiet country parsonage, beholding "God's blessings spring out of his mother earth, and eating his own bread in peace and privacy." We can see Sydney amongst the shades of Penshurst writing on poetry, with all the enthusiasm of a poet, and proving, that "poesie is full of virtue, breeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning." We can see Bacon in his closet, conceiving in his mighty mind the greatest birth of time, and unbent by misfortune, and undejected by disgrace, illuminating philosophy "with all the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, and depth of judgment." We can see Selden amidst bulls, breviats, antiphoners, and monkish manuscripts, laying up the stores of his vast learning, and awaiting from posterity the rewards which were denied him by a prejudiced clergy. We can be present with Burton, whilst enjoying the delights of voluntary solitariness, and walking alone in some grove, betwixt wood and water, by a brook side, to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, and hear him declaring in ecstasy, "what an incomparable delight it is so to melancholize and build castles in the air." And last, though second to none of his contemporaries, we can be witness to the lonely musings of him, "who untamed in war, and indefatigable in literature, as inexhaustible in ideas as exploits, after having brought a new world to light, wrote the history of the old in a prison."—*Article on the Cheetham Library, Blackwood's Magazine, June,* 1821.

HUGH MILLER. 1802—1856.

How pleasant it is, after one has been shut up for months, mayhap, in some country solitude, or engaged in some over-busy scene, without intelligent companionship, to meet with an accomplished, well-read man, with whom to beat over all the literary topics, and settle the merits of the various schools and authors. It is not less pleasant to turn to one's books after some period of close engrossing enjoyment, and to clear off, among the masters of thought and language, all trace of the homely cares and narrow thinking which the season of hard labour had imperatively demanded.—*Essays "The Amenities of Literature."*

EARL OF SHAFTESBURY. 1801—1885.

I am not going to speak with disparagement of the library of reference, but I am going to speak with peculiar admiration and affection of the library of circulation; and for this reason:—because it tends to purify and maintain that which is the very strength of a nation, the very glory of a people;—among all the ordinances of God, the most merciful and the most amicable—the domestic system of the country. And I hope that many a husband, and many a brother, availing himself of the opportunity offered, will carry the book to his own fireside, and make his wife and his children, or his mother and his sister, partake of his studies, and tend to elevate and purify the female mind; for, depend upon this, that a country may stand for a time the corruption of the male sex; it cannot stand for an instant the utter corruption of the female sex. If the men are corrupted, I have some hope; if the women are corrupted, I am in utter despair. And see how it must be:—is it not the case that for the first eight years of life the children are almost exclusively under the care of the mother? Does not the child imbibe at its mother's knees the first lessons of piety and of prayer? Is it not truth, that many of the most eminent saints and servants of God traced, not to their fathers, but to their mothers, the first institution in religious life? And I myself have heard many a man declare that in his after-life of profligacy, and of sorrow, he had been recalled to a sense of God and of eternity, by remembering in an hour of privation and of difficulty, some holy and happy word that fell from the lips of his blessed and sainted mother. Therefore it is that I rejoice in this lending library. I rejoice in the spirit you now manifest, because I think that you show that you have received my words with kindness and affection, and that you will endeavour to do that which, be assured, will conduce to your own honour, to your domestic happiness, and to the security of the kingdom.—*Speech at the Inauguration of the Manchester Free Library, September* 2, 1852.

ROBERT CHAMBERS. 1802—1871.

English literature gives all who can enjoy it a fund of pleasure, of the great amount of which we are not apt to be quite aware till we run over a few of the items. There are the Waverley Novels—in direct contemplation, only the talk of an old-fashioned Scotch gentleman, who died a few years ago—or, in a still more gross consideration, but a few masses of printed paper. Yet, in effect, what are they! To how many thousands upon thousands has life been made less painful or more delightful by these charming tales! The world would have gone on without them, no doubt, but it would not have gone on so agreeably. There would have been an infinite deal less happiness in it during the last twenty-five years, if they had not been written.

Thousands of other things there are in our literature, which we feel to be amongst the most precious of our possessions and privileges. Cowper's Task is as good as an estate to every reading-man in the kingdom. There are some of Burns's songs, the loss of which, if it were possible, would be to me more deplorable, as far as I am personally concerned, than the total repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act. The blotting out of the Vicar of Wakefield from most minds, would be more grievous than to know that the island of Borneo had sunk in the sea. . . . Going back a little farther, how does the heart leap up when we recollect the many admirable things of Fielding and Smollett. Parson Adams himself gilds the whole time. What simplicity, what true goodness!—verily, the world's history gives us few characters equal to him—and yet we feel that he is natural.

There are some books usually read in youth, and without which youth would not be what it is. Of these are Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver. How youth passed long ago, when there was no Crusoe to waft it away in fancy to the Pacific, and fix it upon the lonely doings of the shipwrecked mariner, is inconceivable; but we can readily suppose that it must have been essentially different. The first reading of Crusoe is now a feature in every man's biography. Gulliver is not so indispensable, but yet the having him is much to be rejoiced in.

The Arabian Nights' Entertainments are not ours by birth, but they have nevertheless taken their place amongst the similar things of our own which constitute the national literary inheritance. They bring us into a considerably different world from any other we are acquainted with. The caliph, the cadi, the Mohammedan faith, genii, enchanters, are the prominent novelties they display to us. There is a fine want of precise outline about everything in the book. We see as through some prismatically-disturbing medium. . . . Altogether, it is a glorious book, and one to which we cannot well shew enough of respect.

Come we now to Pope, that prince of sayers of acute and exquisite things—that most mellifluous of all the rhetorical class of poets amongst whom he flourished. Fashion has set him a little aside, which it can never do with an author who has not written in some measure according to a fashion; but he was a fine spirit and a great poet, nevertheless, and English literature would shew a mighty blank indeed were he taken out of it. . . . Dryden is even better than Pope. He has immense masculine energies. There is a lashing strength about his verse that no other writer approaches. His works are the farewell of the sound old English, for which the stiffened and glistered language of the last century was the substitute, and which there has latterly been a disposition to revive. Dryden is also much out of view, but most undeservedly. Few know what a treasure of thought and expression lies in his Hind and Panther, and Fables. We are apt, in the large attention we pay to modern literature, to set down him and Pope in our minds as scarcely poets at all, or at the best good versifiers; but when we open their works, and actually read them, we cease to wonder that our fathers and grandfathers talked of these men as something only a little lower than the gods.

A class of compositions altogether apart from all that have yet been adverted to remains to be noticed. These are the songs and ballads, whether of England or of Scotland. No era can be mentioned for these compositions: they have glimpsed forth from the darkness of past ages, as stars come by night into the sky, without any one being able to tell exactly when they first became visible. No authors' names can be mentioned for them: they have sprung forth like the unbidden beauty of the prairie, which no one can tell how it became planted. Involuntary gushings they would appear to have been of that "faculty divine" which has resided at all times in the bosoms of the people, and may or may not have regular professors, as the accident of culture may direct. . . . Nor less are the charms of the song-class of our traditionary poetry. The "Cowdenknowes" will be for ever vocal with the sweetest of verse, and the "Marion of the Ewe-Buchts" must shine as a star until all time.

What is above written gives but the heads of the wealth which we possess under the name of English literature. The addition of the inferior and yet worthy names would swell the account, like the putting down of ciphers on the right-hand side of a number. And is not this substantial wealth, albeit it is not of the kind which the political economists insist so much upon, that kind which, as they say, has an exchangeable value? Does any man think otherwise, let him only reflect what would be our condition if no literature, ancient or modern, existed. The accumulation of these stores of the thoughts and fancies of eminent minds, is just like the construction of public works in a country; and a country without a literature is like a country in which as yet no roads have been formed, no bridges thrown over rivers, nor any halls of popular assembly built. But England is in both these respects a wealthy country. It has been put by our fathers into our hands, furnished with an amount of physical conveniences and sources of comfort beyond all precedent, and endowed with an intellectual inheritance such as no other country ever had. Evils manifold may affect it, if some will have the case to be so; but, amidst all that troubles her, there still remain, unsullied, intact, ever ready for the solacement of her thinking sons, the deathless productions of her intellectual great.—*Chambers's Journal: "What English Literature Gives us."*

My brother William and I lived in lodgings together. Our room and bed cost three shillings a week. . . . The woman who kept the lodgings was a Peebles woman, who knew and wished to be kind to us. She was, however, of a very narrow disposition, partly the result of poverty. I used to be in great distress for want of fire. I could not afford either that or candle myself. So I have often sat beside her kitchen fire—

if fire it could be called, which was only a little heap of embers—reading Horace and conning my dictionary by a light which required me to hold the books almost close to the grate. What a miserable winter that was! Yet I cannot help feeling proud of my trials at that time. My brother and I—he then between fifteen and sixteen, I between thirteen and fourteen—had made a resolution together that we would exercise the last degree of self-denial. My brother actually saved money out of his income. I remember seeing him take five-and-twenty shillings out of a closed box which he kept to receive his savings; and that was the spare money of only a twelvemonth.—*Memoir of Robert Chambers; with Autobiographic Reminiscences of William Chambers.*

ALEXANDER COCKBURN (LORD CHIEF JUSTICE).

1802—1880.

Happy is he who, when the day's work is done, finds his rest, and solace, and recreation in communion with the master minds of the present and of the past—in study, in literature, and the enjoyment of pleasures which are to be derived from this source. If I might address to the younger portion of the community a few words of advice and exhortation—trusting to one who has been as hard a worker as the hardest workers amongst you—I would say there is no rest, no recreation, no refreshment to the wearied and jaded body and mind, worn by work and toil, equal to the intellectual pleasures to which I have just been referring. Let them bear in mind that the time will come when the pleasures that now allure them and draw them away from intellectual pursuits will come to an end. Old age will take the place of bodily vigour. Let them again trust to one who is advancing fast in declining years—there is no enjoyment to equal the enjoyment of the great intellectual treasures which are always at hand and always at your disposal. . . . With the prolonged cultivation of the intellect in continued study, together with the continued worship and admiration of all that is pure and holy, sublime and beautiful in nature, in letters, and in art, the mind may be made to preserve its energy and vigour long after old age has crept upon us. . . . Happy those who take to study and find in knowledge, in learning, and in those invaluable and priceless treasures, which the great geniuses, who have thought and written for us, have left us, as an undying inheritance, a lasting, a pure, an unmixed pleasure.—*Address to the members of the Manchester Athenæum, January* 22, 1875.

VICTOR HUGO. 1802—1885.

Tu viens d'incendier la Bibliothèque?
—Oui.
J'ai mis le feu là.
—Mais c'est un crime inouï,
Crime commis par toi contre toi-même, infâme!
Mais tu viens de tuer le rayon de ton âme!
C'est ton propre flambeau que tu viens de souffler!
Ce que ta rage impie et folle ose brûler,

C'est ton bien, ton trésor, ta dot, ton héritage !
Le livre, hostile au maître, est à ton avantage.
Le livre a toujours pris fait et cause pour toi.
Une bibliothèque est un acte de foi
Des générations ténébreuses encore
Qui rendent dans la nuit témoignage à l'aurore.
Quoi ! dans ce vénérable amas des vérités,
Dans ces chefs-d'œuvre pleins de foudre et de clartés,
Dans ce tombeau des temps devenu répertoire,
Dans les siècles, dans l'homme antique, dans l'histoire,
Dans le passé, leçon qu'épelle l'avenir,
Dans ce qui commença pour ne jamais finir,
Dans les poëtes ! quoi, dans ce gouffre des bibles,
Dans le divin monceau des Eschyles terribles,
Des Homères, des Jobs, debout sur l'horizon,
Dans Molière, Voltaire et Kant, dans la raison,
Tu jettes, misérable, une torche enflammée !
De tout l'esprit humain tu fais de la fumée !
As-tu donc oublié que ton libérateur,
C'est le livre ? le livre est là sur la hauteur ;
Il luit ; parce qu'il brille et qu'il les illumine,
Il détruit l'échafaud, la guerre, la famine ;
Il parle ; plus d'esclave et plus de paria.
Ouvre un livre. Platon, Milton, Beccaria.
Lis ces prophètes, Dante, ou Shakspeare, ou Corneille ;
L'âme immense qu'ils ont en eux, en toi s'éveille ;
Ébloui, tu te sens le même homme qu'eux tous ;
Tu deviens en lisant grave, pensif et doux ;
Tu sens dans ton esprit tous ces grands hommes croître ;
Ils t'enseignent ainsi que l'aube éclaire un cloître ;
A mesure qu'il plonge en ton cœur plus avant,
Leur chaud rayon t'apaise et te fait plus vivant ;

Ton âme interrogée est prête à leur répondre ;
Tu te reconnais bon, puis meilleur ; tu sens fondre
Comme la neige au feu, ton orgueil, tes fureurs,
Le mal, les préjugés, les rois, les empereurs !
Car la science en l'homme arrive la première.
Puis vient la liberté. Toute cette lumière,
C'est à toi, comprends donc, et c'est toi qui l'éteins !
Les buts rêvés par toi sont par le livre atteints.
Le livre en ta pensée entre, il défait en elle
Les liens que l'erreur à la vérité mêle,
Car tout conscience est un nœud gordien.
Il est ton médecin, ton guide, ton gardien.
Ta haine, il la guérit ; ta démence, il te l'ôte.
Voilà ce que tu perds, hélas, et par ta faute !
Le livre est ta richesse à toi ! c'est le savoir,
Le droit, la vérité, la vertu, le devoir,
Le progrès, la raison dissipant tout délire.
Et tu détruis cela, toi !
—Je ne sais pas lire.

L'Année Terrible. Juin, viii. : "*A Qui La Faute?*"

[To Miss Mathilde Blind, the accomplished translator of Strauss's "The Old Faith and the New," author of "The Prophecy of St. Oran, and other Poems," and "George Eliot," in the Eminent Women Series, the compiler is indebted for the following spirited rendering of Victor Hugo's indignant remonstrance. The lines here translated constitute an occurrence in one of the twelve divisions (Juin) of "L'Année Terrible," 1871.

The remonstrance is supposed to be addressed to a Communist, whose incendiary rage has just destroyed a Parisian Library. After having been eloquently reproached for quenching the light of reason in his own soul, and destroying his own heritage, the Communist replies in that epigrammatic ending so characteristic of Victor Hugo, and so crushingly unanswerable: "I cannot read."]

Translation.

'Tis you then burned the library?
I did,
I brought the fire.
—O most unheard-of crime,
Crime, wretch, which you upon yourself commit!
Why, you have quenched the light of your own soul!
'Tis your own torch which you have just put out!
That which your impious madness has dared burn,
Was your own treasure, fortune, heritage!
The Book (the master's bugbear) is your gain!
The Book has ever taken side with you.
A Library implies an act of faith
Which generations still in darkness hid
Sign in their night in witness of the dawn.
What! miscreant, you fling your flaming torch
Into this pile of venerable truths,
These master-works that thunder forth and lighten,
Into this tomb become time's inventory,
Into the ages, the antique man, the past
Which still spells out the future—history
Which having once begun will never end,

Into the poets! Into this mine of Bibles
And all this heap divine—dread Æschylus,
Homer, and Job upright against th' horizon,
Molière, Voltaire and Kant you set on fire!
Thus turning human reason into smoke!
Have you forgotten that your liberator
Is this same Book? The Book that's set on high
And shines; because it lightens and illumes;
It undermines the gallows, war and famine;
It speaks; the Slave and Pariah disappear.
Open a Book. Plato, Beccaria, Milton,
Those prophets, Dante, Shakspeare or Corneille,
Shall not their great souls waken yours in you?
Dazzled you feel the same as each of them;
Reading you grow more gentle, pensive, grave;
Within your heart you feel these great men grow;
They teach you as the dawn lights up a cloister,
And as their warm beams penetrate your heart
You are appeased and thrill with stronger life;
Your soul interrogated answers theirs;
You feel you're good, then better;—as snow in fire—
Then melt away your pride, your prejudice,
Evil and rage and Kings and Emperors!
For Science, see you, first lays hold of men,
Then Liberty, and all this flood of light,
Mark me, 'tis you who have extinguished it!
The goal you dreamt of by the Book was reached;
The Book enters your thoughts and there unties
The bonds wherein truth was by error held,
For each man's conscience is a Gordian knot.
The Book is your physician, guardian, guide:
It heals your hate, and cures your frenzied mood.

See what you lose by your own fault, alas!
Why, know the Book's your wealth! The Book means
truth,
Knowledge and Duty, Virtue, Progress, Right,
And Reason scattering hence delirious dreams.
And you destroy this, you!
I cannot read.

LORD LYTTON (E. L. BULWER). 1803—1873.

"I say, then, that books, taken indiscriminately, are no cure to the diseases and afflictions of the mind. There is a world of science necessary in the taking them. I have known some people in great sorrow fly to a novel, or the last light book in fashion. One might as well take a rose-draught for the plague! Light reading does not do when the heart is really heavy. I am told that Goethe, when he lost his son, took to study a science that was new to him. Ah! Goethe was a physician who knew what he was about. In a great grief like that, you cannot tickle and divert the mind; you must wrench it away, abstract, absorb—bury it in an abyss, hurry it into a labyrinth. Therefore, for the irremediable sorrows of middle life and old age, I recommend a strict chronic course of science and hard reasoning—Counter-irritation. Bring the brain to act upon the heart! If science is too much against the grain (for we have not all got mathematical heads,) something in the reach of the humblest understanding, but sufficiently searching to the highest—a new language—Greek, Arabic, Scandinavian, Chinese, or Welsh! For the loss of fortune, the dose should be applied less directly to the understanding—I would administer something elegant and cordial. For as the heart is crushed and lacerated by a loss in the affections, so it is rather the head that aches and suffers by the loss of money. Here we find the higher class of poets a very valuable remedy. For observe that poets of the grander and more comprehensive kind of genius have in them two separate men, quite distinct from each other—the imaginative man, and the practical, circumstantial man; and it is the happy mixture of these that suits diseases of the mind, half imaginative and half practical. There is Homer, now lost with the gods, now at home with the homeliest, the very 'poet of circumstance,' as Gray has finely called him; and yet with imagination enough to seduce and coax the dullest into forgetting, for a while, that little spot on his desk which his banker's book can cover. There is Virgil, far below him, indeed—

'Virgil the wise,
Whose verse walks highest, but not flies,'

as Cowley expresses it. But Virgil still has genius enough to be two men—to lead you into the fields, not only to listen to the pastoral reed, and to hear the bees hum, but to note how you can make the most of the glebe and the vineyard. There is Horace, charming man of the world, who will condole with you feelingly on the loss of your fortune, and by no means undervalue the good things of this life; but who will yet show you that a man may be happy with a *vile modicum* or *parva rura*. There is Shakspeare, who, above all poets, is the mysterious dual of hard sense and empyreal fancy—and a great many more, whom I need not name; but who, if you take to them gently and quietly, will not, like your mere philosopher, your unreasonable stoic, tell you that you have lost nothing; but who will insensibly steal you out of this world, with its losses and crosses, and slip you into another world, before you know where you are!—a world where you are just as welcome, though you carry no more earth of your lost acres with you than covers the sole of your shoe. Then, for hypochondria and satiety, what is better than a brisk alterative course of travels,—especially early, out-of-the-way, marvellous, legendary travels! How they freshen up the spirits! How they take you out of the humdrum yawning state you are in. See, with Herodotus, young Greece spring up into life; or note with him how already the wondrous old Orient world is crumbling into giant decay; or go with Carpini and Rubruquis to Tartary, meet 'the carts of Zagathai laden with houses, and think that a great city is travelling towards you.' Gaze on that vast wild empire of the Tartar, where the descendants of Jenghis 'multiply and disperse over the immense waste desert, which is as boundless as the ocean.' Sail with the early northern discoverers, and penetrate to the heart of winter, among sea-serpents and bears, and tusked morses, with the faces of men. Then, what think you of Columbus, and the stern soul of Cortes, and the kingdom of Mexico, and the strange gold city of the Peruvians with that audacious brute, Pizarro? and the Polynesians, just for all the world like the ancient Britons? and the American Indians, and the South-Sea Islanders? how petulant, and young, and adventurous, and frisky your hypochondriac must get upon a regimen like that! Then, for that vice of the mind which I call sectarianism—not in the religious sense of the word, but little, narrow prejudices, that make you hate your next-door neighbour, because he has his eggs roasted when you have yours boiled; and gossiping and prying into people's affairs, and backbiting, and thinking heaven and earth are coming together, if some broom touch a cobweb that you have let grow over the window-sill of your brains—what like a large and generous, mildly aperient (I beg your pardon, my dear) course of history! How it clears away all the fumes of the head!—better than the hellebore with which the old leeches of the middle ages purged the cerebellum. There, amidst all that great whirl and *sturmbad* (storm-bath), as the Germans say, of kingdoms and empires, and races and ages, how your mind enlarges beyond that little, feverish animosity to John Styles; or that unfortunate prepossession of yours, that all the world is interested in your grievances against Tom Stokes and his wife!

"I can only touch, you see, on a few ingredients in this magnificent pharmacy—its resources are boundless, but require the nicest discretion. I remember to have cured a disconsolate widower, who obstinately refused every other medicament, by a strict course of geology. I dipped him deep into gneiss and mica schist. Amidst the first strata, I suffered the watery action to expend itself upon cooling crystallised masses; and, by the time I had got him into the tertiary period, amongst the transition chalks of Maestricht, and the conchiferous marls of Gosau, he was ready for a new wife. Kitty, my dear! it is no laughing matter. I made no less notable a cure of a young scholar at Cambridge, who was meant for the church, when he suddenly caught a cold fit of freethinking, with great shiverings, from wading out of his depth in Spinosa. None of the divines, whom I first tried, did him the least good in that state; so I turned over a new leaf, and doctored him gently upon the chapters of faith in Abraham Tucker's book, (you should read it, Sisty;) then I threw in strong doses of Fichte; after that I put him on the Scotch metaphysicians, with plunge-baths into certain German transcendentalists; and having convinced him that faith is not an unphilosophical state of mind, and that he might believe without compromising his understanding—for he was mightily conceited on that score—I threw in my divines, which he was now fit to digest; and his theological constitution, since then, has become so robust, that he has eaten up two livings and a deanery! In fact, I have a plan for a library, that, instead of heading its compartments, 'Philology, Natural Science, Poetry,' &c., one shall head them according to the diseases for which they are severally good, bodily and mental—up from a dire calamity, or the pangs of the gout, down to a fit of the spleen or a slight catarrh; for which last your light reading comes in with a whey-posset and barley-water. But," continued my father, more gravely, "when some one sorrow, that is yet reparable, gets hold of your mind like a monomania—when you think, because heaven has denied you this or that, on which you had set your heart, that all your life must be a blank—oh! then diet yourself well on biography—the biography of good and great men. See how little a space one sorrow really makes in life. See scarce a page, perhaps, given to some grief similar to your own; and how triumphantly the life sails on beyond it! You thought the wing was broken!—Tut—tut—it was but a bruised feather! See what life leaves behind it when all is done!—a summary of positive facts far out of the region of sorrow and suffering, linking themselves with the being of the world. Yes, biography is the medicine here! Roland, you said you would try my prescription—here it is,"—and my father took up a book, and reached it to the Captain.

My uncle looked over it—"Life of the Reverend Robert Hall." "Brother, he was a Dissenter, and thank heaven! I am a church-and-state man, to the back-bone!"

"Robert Hall was a brave man, and a true soldier under the Great Commander," said my father, artfully.

The Captain mechanically carried his forefinger to his forehead in military fashion, and saluted the book respectfully.

"I have another copy for you, Pisistratus—that is mine which I have lent Roland. This, which I bought for you to-day, you will keep."

"Thank you, sir," said I, listlessly, not seeing what great good the "Life of Robert Hall" could do me, or why the same medicine should suit the old weather-beaten uncle, and the nephew yet in his teens.

"I have said nothing," resumed my father, slightly bowing his broad temples, "of the Book of Books, for that is the *lignum vitæ*, the cardinal medicine for all. These are but the subsidiaries."—*The Caxtons: "A Family Picture."*

Laws die, Books never.
Richelieu. Act i., *Scene* 2.

Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanter's wand! . . .
. . . Take away the sword—
States can be saved without it.
Richelieu. Act ii., *Scene* 2.

Ye ever-living and imperial Souls,
Who rule us from the page in which ye breathe,

. . . . . .

What were our wanderings if without your goals?
As air and light, the glory ye dispense,
Becomes our being—who of us can tell
What he had been, had Cadmus never taught
The art that fixes into form the thought—
Had Plato never spoken from his cell,
Or his high harp blind Homer never strung?—
Kinder all earth hath grown since genial Shakspeare sung!

. . . . . .

The Wise
(Minstrel or Sage) *out* of their books are clay;
But *in* their books, as from their graves, they rise,
Angels—that, side by side, upon our way,
Walk with and warn us!
Hark! the world so loud
And *they*, the movers of the world, so still!

. . . .

We call some books immoral! *Do they live?*
If so, believe me, TIME hath made them pure.

In Books, the veriest wicked rest in peace—
God wills that nothing evil should endure;
The grosser parts fly off and leave the whole,
As the dust leaves the disembodied soul!

. . . . . .

All books grow homilies by time; they are
Temples, at once, and Landmarks. In them, we
Who *but* for them, upon that inch of ground
We call "THE PRESENT," from the cell could see
No daylight trembling on the dungeon bar;
Turn, as we list, the globe's great axle round,
Traverse all space, and number every star,
And feel the Near less household than the Far!
There is no Past, so long as Books shall live!
A disinterr'd Pompeii wakes again
For him who seeks yon well.

The Souls of Books.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON. 1803—1882.

The best rule of reading will be a method from nature, and not a mechanical one of hours and pages. It holds each student to a pursuit of his native aim, instead of a desultory miscellany. Let him read what is proper to him, and not waste his memory on a crowd of mediocrities. . . . The three practical rules which I have to offer are: 1. Never read any book that is not a year old. 2. Never read any but famed books. 3. Never read any but what you like; or in Shakespeare's phrase,—

"No profit goes where is no pleasure ta'en:
In brief, sir, study what you most affect."

Consider what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries, in a thousand years, have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age. We owe to books those general benefits which come from high intellectual action. Thus, I think, we often owe to them the perception of immortality. They impart sympathetic activity to the moral power. Go with mean people, and you think life is mean. Then read Plutarch, and the world is a proud place, peopled with men of positive quality, with heroes and demigods standing around us, who will not let us sleep. Then they address the imagination: only poetry inspires poetry. They become the organic culture of the time. College education is the reading of certain books which the common sense of all scholars agrees will represent the science already accumulated. If you know that,—for instance, in geometry, if you have read Euclid and Laplace,—your opinion has some value; if you do not know these, you are not entitled to give any opinion on the subject. Whenever any sceptic or bigot claims to be heard on the questions of intellect and morals, we ask if he is familiar with the books of Plato, where all his pert objections have once for all been disposed of. If not, he has no right to our time. Let him go and find himself answered there.

Meantime the colleges, whilst they provide us with libraries, furnish no professor of books; and, I think, no chair is so much wanted. In a library we are surrounded by many hundreds of dear friends, but they are imprisoned by an enchanter in these paper and leathern boxes; and though they know us, and have been waiting two, ten, or twenty centuries for us,—some of them,—and are eager to give us a sign, and unbosom themselves, it is the law of their limbo that they must not speak until spoken to; and as the enchanter has dressed them, like battalions of infantry, in coat and jacket of one cut, by the thousand and ten thousand, your chance of hitting on the right one is to be computed by the arithmetical rule of Permutation and Combination,—not a choice out of three caskets, but out of half a million caskets all alike. But it happens, in our experience, that in this lottery there are at least fifty or a hundred blanks to a prize. It seems, then, as if some charitable soul, after losing a great deal of time among the false books, and alighting upon a few true ones which made him happy and wise, would do a right act in naming those which have been bridges or ships to carry him safely over dark morasses and barren oceans, into the heart of sacred cities, into palaces and temples. This would be best done by those great masters of books who from time to time appear,—the Fabricii, the Seldens, Magliabecchis, Scaligers, Mirandolas, Bayles, Johnsons, whose eyes sweep the whole horizon of learning. But private readers, reading purely for love of the book, would serve us by leaving each the shortest note of what he found.—*Society and Solitude.*

In the highest civilization the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity. Like Plato's disciple who has perceived a truth, "he is preserved from harm until another period." . . . We find in Southey's "Common-place Book" this said of the Earl of Strafford.: "I learned one rule of him," says Sir G. Radcliffe, "which I think worthy to be remembered. When he met with a well-penned oration or tract upon any subject, he framed a speech upon the same argument, inventing and disposing what seemed fit to be said upon that subject, before he read the book; then, reading, compared his own with the author's, and noted his own defects and the author's art and fulness; whereby he drew all that ran in the author more strictly, and might better judge of his own wants to supply them." . . .

Original power is usually accompanied with assimilating power, and we value in Coleridge his excellent knowledge and quotations perhaps as much, possibly more, than his original suggestions. If an author give us just distinctions, inspiring lessons, or imaginative poetry, it is not so important to us whose they are. If we are fired and guided by these, we know him as a benefactor, and shall return to him as long as he serves us so well. We may like well to know what is Plato's, and what is Montesquieu's or Goethe's part, and what thought was always dear to the writer himself; but the worth of the sentences consists in their radiancy and equal aptitude to all intelligence. They fit all our facts like a charm. We respect ourselves the more that we know them.

Next to the originator of a good sentence is the first quoter of it. Many will read the book before one thinks of quoting a passage. As soon as he has done this, that line will be quoted east and west. Then there are great ways of borrowing. Genius borrows nobly. When Shakspeare is charged with debts to his authors, Landor replies: "Yet he was more original than his originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life." And we must thank Karl Ottfried Müller for the just remark, "Poesy, drawing within its circle all that is glorious and inspiring, gave itself but little concern as to where its flowers originally grew." So Voltaire usually imitated, but with such superiority that Dubuc said: "He is like the false Amphitryon; although the stranger, it is always he who has the air of being master of the house." Wordsworth, as soon as he heard a good thing, caught it up, meditated upon it, and very soon reproduced it in his conversation and writing. If De Quincey said, "That is what I told you," he replied, "No; that is mine—mine, and not yours." On the whole, we like the valor of it. 'T is on Marmontel's principle, "I pounce on what is mine, wherever I find it;" and on Bacon's broader rule, "I take all knowledge to be my province." It betrays the consciousness that truth is the property of no individual, but is the treasure of all men. And inasmuch as any writer has ascended to a just view of man's condition, he has adopted this tone. In so far as the receiver's aim is on life, and not on literature, will be his indifference to the source. The nobler the truth or sentiment, the less imports the question of authorship. It never troubles the simple seeker from whom he derived such or such a sentiment. Whoever expresses to us a just thought makes ridiculous the pains of the critic who should tell him where such a word had been said before. "It is no more according to Plato than according to me." Truth is always present: it only needs to lift the iron lids of the mind's eye to read its oracles. But the moment there is the purpose of display, the fraud is exposed. In fact, it is as difficult to appropriate the thoughts of others, as it is to invent. Always some steep transition, some sudden alteration of temperature, of point of view, betrays the foreign interpolation. . . .

We are as much informed of a writer's genius by what he selects as by what he originates. We read the quotation with his eyes, and find a new and fervent sense; as a passage from one of the poets, well recited, borrows new interest from the rendering. As the journals say, "the italics are ours." The profit of books is according to the sensibility of the reader. The profoundest thought or passion sleeps as in a mine, until an equal mind and heart finds and publishes it. . . .

In hours of high mental activity we sometimes do the book too much honor, reading out of it better things than the author wrote,—reading, as we say, between the lines. You have had the like experience in conversation: the wit was in what you heard, not in what the speakers said. Our best thought came from others. We heard in their words a deeper sense than the speakers put into them, and could express ourselves in other people's phrases to finer purpose than they knew. . . .

We cannot overstate our debt to the Past, but the moment has the supreme claim. The Past is for us: but the sole terms on which it can become ours are its subordination to the Present. Only an inventor knows how to borrow, and every man is or should be an inventor. We must not tamper with the organic motion of the soul. 'T is certain that thought has its own proper motion, and the hints which flash from it, the words overheard at unawares by the free mind, are trustworthy and fertile, when obeyed, and not perverted to low and selfish account. This vast memory is only raw material. The divine gift is ever the instant life, which receives and uses and creates, and can well bury the old in the omnipotency with which Nature decomposes all her harvest for recomposition.—*Letters and Social Aims: "Quotation and Originality."*

"Literature is the record of the best thoughts. Every attainment and discipline which increases a man's acquaintance with the invisible world, lifts his being. Every thing that gives him a new perception of beauty, multiplies his pure enjoyments. A river of thought is always running out of the invisible world into the mind of man. Shall not they who received the largest streams spread abroad the healing waters?

"Homer and Plato and Pindar and Shakspere serve many more than have heard their names. Thought is the most volatile of all things. It can not be contained in any cup, though you shut the lid never so tight. Once brought into the world, it runs over the vessel which received it into all minds that love it. The very language we speak thinks for us by the subtle distinctions which already are marked for us by its words, and every one of them is the contribution of the wit of one and another sagacious man in all the centuries of time. Consider that it is our own state of mind at any time that makes our estimate of life and the world. . . . Now, if you can kindle the imagination by a new thought, by heroic histories, by uplifting poetry, instantly you expand,—are cheered, inspired, and become wise, and even prophetic. Music works this miracle for those who have a good ear; what omniscience has music! so absolutely impersonal, and yet every sufferer feels his secret sorrow reached. Yet to a scholar the book is as good or better. There is no hour of vexation which, on a little reflection, will not find diversion and relief in the library. His companions are few; at the moment he has none; but, year by year, these silent friends supply their place. Many times the reading of a book has made the fortune of the man,—has decided his way of life. It makes friends. 'Tis the tie between men to have been delighted with the same book. Every one of us is always in search of his friend; and when, unexpectedly, he finds a stranger enjoying the rare poet or thinker who is dear to his own solitude, it is like finding a brother.

"In books I have the history or the energy of the past. Angels they are to us of entertainment, sympathy, and provocation. With them many of us spend the most of our life,—these silent guides, these tractable prophets, historians, and singers, whose embalmed life is the highest feat of art; who now cast their moonlight illumination over solitude, weariness, and fallen fortunes. You say 'tis a languid pleasure. Yes; but its tractableness, coming and going like a dog at your bidding, compensates the quietness, and contrast with the slowness of fortune, and the inaccessibleness of persons. You meet with a man of science, a good thinker or good wit; but you do not know how to draw out of him that which he knows. But the book is a sure friend, always ready at your first leisure, opens to the very page you desire, and shuts at your first fatigue, as possibly your professor might not.

"It is a tie between men to have read the same book; and it is a disadvantage not to have read the book your mates have read, or not to have read it at the same time, so that it may take the place in your culture it does in theirs, and you shall understand their allusions to it, and not give it more or less emphasis than they do. . . .

"In saying these things for books, I do not for a moment forget that they are secondary, mere means, and only used in the off-hours, only in the pause, and, as it were, the sleep, or passive state, of the mind. The intellect reserves all its rights. Instantly, when the mind itself wakes, all books, all past acts are forgotten, huddled aside as impertinent in the august presence of the creator. Their costliest benefit is that they set us free from ourselves; for they wake the imagination and the sentiment, and in their inspirations we dispense with books. Let me add, then, read proudly,—put the duty of being read invariably on the author. If he is not read, whose fault is it? I am quite ready to be charmed, but I shall not make believe I am charmed."—*Address on the Dedication of the Free Library in Concord, May,* 1873.

"Let us not forget the genial miraculous force we have known to proceed from a book. We go musing into the vault of day and night; no constellation shines, no muse descends, the stars are white points, the roses brick-colored dust, the frogs pipe, mice peep, and wagons creak along the road. We return to the house and take up Plutarch or Augustine, and read a few sentences or pages, and lo! the air swims with life; the front of heaven is full of fiery shapes; secrets of magnanimity and grandeur invite us on every hand; life is made up of them. Such is our debt to a book."—*The Dial*, 1840: "*Thoughts on Modern Literature.*"

"Whenever I have to do with young men and women, he said, I always wish to know what their books are; I wish to defend them from bad; I wish to introduce them to good; I wish to speak of the immense benefit which a good mind derives from reading, probably much more to a good mind from reading than from conversation. It is of first importance, of course, to select a friend; for a young man should find a friend a little older than himself, or whose mind is a little older than his own, in order to wake up his genius. That service is performed oftener for us by books. I think, if a very active mind, if a young man of ability, should give you his honest experience, you would find that he owed more impulse to books than to living minds. The great masters of thought, the Platos,—not only those that we call sacred writers, but those that we call profanes,—have acted on the mind with more energy than any companions. I think that every remarkable person whom you meet will testify to something like that, that the fast-opening mind has found more inspiration in his book than in his friend. We take the book under great advantages. We read it when we are alone. We read it with an attention not distracted. And, perhaps, we find there our own thought, a little better, a little maturer, than it is in ourselves."—*Address to the Students (coloured) of Howard University, Washington, January,* 1872.

RICHARD COBDEN. 1804—1865.

Gentlemen, I exhort you to maintain this and kindred institutions on every ground, public and private. I have had many changes, I have seen many phases of society, probably as many as most. I do not say this egotistically, because I am merely now going to elucidate a thought. I have seen many phases of society, I have had many excited means of occupation, and of gratification; but I tell you honestly and conscientiously, that if I want to look back to that which has given me the purest satisfaction of mind, it is in those pursuits which are accessible to every member of the Athenæum. I have not found the greatest enjoyment in the exciting plaudits of a public meeting; I have not found the greatest pleasure or interest in intercourse, sometimes with men of elevated sphere abroad, where others would think probably that you were privileged to meet such men; I come back to you conscientiously to declare that the purest pleasures I have ever known are those accessible to you all; it is in the calm intercourse with intelligent minds, and in the communion with the departed great, through books, by our own firesides.—*Address to the members of the Manchester Athenæum, November* 18, 1847.

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE. 1805—1872.

Sir Walter Scott has also kindled a healthy desire among us for real histories, not merely historical novels. The demand has been met by many authors, whose patient industry as well as their power of exhibiting acts, and the sources of acts, surely promise that they shall live. Charles Lamb said, in one of his exquisite essays, that there were some histories written in the last age which cannot be called books at all. They were merely the pasteboard covers "History of England," or "History of the World," which careful librarians put into their shelves when their books are absent. Some of the historians that our age has produced are books in the truest sense of the word. They illustrate great periods in our own annals, and in the annals of other countries. They show what a divine discipline has been at work to form men: they teach us that there is such a discipline at work to form us into men. That is the test to which I have urged that all books must at last be brought: if they do not bear it their doom is fixed. They may be light or heavy, the penny sheet, or the vast folio; they may speak of things seen or unseen; of Science or Art; of what has been, or what is to be; they may amuse us, weary us, flatter us, or scorn us; if they do not assist to make us better or more substantial men, they are only providing fuel for a fire larger and more utterly destructive than that which consumed the library of the Ptolemies.—*The Friendship of Books, and other Lectures, by the Rev. F. D. Maurice. On Books: An Address delivered to the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, November,* 1865.

SAMUEL PALMER (ARTIST). 1805—1881.

"There is nothing like poetry," said Charles James Fox, who might often be found engrossed by Virgil's Eclogues in the intervals of a very different career. I think we may extend his remark, and say, "There is nothing like books." Of all things sold incomparably the cheapest; of all pleasures the least palling: they take up little room, keep quiet when they are not wanted, and, when taken up, bring us face to face with the choicest men who have ever lived, at their choicest moments. As my walking companion in the country I was so un-English as, on the whole, to prefer my pocket Milton, which I carried for twenty years, to the not unbeloved bull-terrier "Trimmer," who accompanied me for five: for Milton never fidgeted, frightened horses, ran after sheep, or got run over by a goods-van.—*Memoir of Samuel Palmer, the artist, by A. H. Palmer*, 1882.

LORD BEACONSFIELD (BENJAMIN DISRAELI).
1805—1881.

The idea that human happiness is dependent on the cultivation of the mind, and on the discovery of truth, is, next to the conviction of our immortality, the idea the most full of consolation to man; for the cultivation of the mind has no limits, and truth is the only thing that is eternal. Indeed, when you consider what a man is who knows only what is passing under his own eyes, and what the condition of the same man must be who belongs to an institution like the one which has assembled us together to-night, is it—ought it to be—a matter of surprise that, from that moment to the present, you have had a general feeling throughout the civilised world in favour of the diffusion of knowledge? A man who knows nothing but the history of the passing hour, who knows nothing of the history of the past, but that a certain person whose brain was as vacant as his own occupied the same house as himself, who in a moment of despondency or of gloom has no hope in the morrow because he has read nothing that has taught him that the morrow has any changes—that man, compared with him who has read the most ordinary abridgment of history, or the most common philosophical speculation, is as distinct and different an animal as if he had fallen from some other planet, was influenced by a different organization, working for a different end, and hoping for a different result. It is knowledge that equalizes the social condition of man—that gives to all, however different their political position, passions which are in common, and enjoyments which are universal. Knowledge is like the mystic ladder in the patriarch's dream. Its base rests on the primeval earth—its crest is lost in the shadowy splendour of the empyrean; while the great authors who for traditionary ages have held the chain of science and philosophy, of poesy and erudition, are the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale, and maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and heaven.—*Speech to the members of the Manchester Athenæum, October* 23, 1844.

An Author may influence the fortunes of the world to as great an extent as a statesman or a warrior; and the deeds and performances by which this influence is created and exercised, may rank in their interest and importance with the decisions of great Congresses, or the skilful valour of a memorable field. M. de Voltaire was certainly a greater Frenchman than Cardinal Flury, the Prime Minister of France in his time. His actions were more important; and it is certainly not too much to maintain that the exploits of Homer, Aristotle, Dante, or my Lord Bacon were as considerable events as anything that occurred at Actium, Lepanto, or Blenheim. A Book may be as great a thing as a Battle, and there are systems of Philosophy that have produced as great revolutions as any that have disturbed the social and political existence of our centuries. *Memoir of Isaac Disraeli, by his Son, Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield). Prefixed to posthumous Edition of "Curiosities of Literature."*

H. W. LONGFELLOW. 1807—1882.

O precious evenings! all too swiftly sped,
Leaving us heirs to amplest heritages
Of all the best thoughts of the greatest sages,
And giving tongues unto the silent dead!

Sonnet to Mrs. Fanny Kemble.

[The following touching sonnet is the last emanation from the pen of a poet whose writings will always be loved and admired for their purity, tenderness, and simplicity]:—

My Books.

Sadly as some old mediæval knight
  Gazed at the arms he could no longer wield,
  The sword two-handed and the shining shield
  Suspended in the hall, and full in sight,
While secret longings for the lost delight
  Of tourney or adventure in the field
  Came over him, and tears but half concealed
  Trembled and fell upon his beard of white,
So I behold these books upon their shelf,
  My ornaments and arms of other days;
  Not wholly useless, though no longer used,
For they remind me of my other self,
  Younger and stronger, and the pleasant ways,
  In which I walked, now clouded and confused.

December, 1881.

G. S. HILLARD (AMERICAN LAWYER).
1808—1879.

Other things being equal, the man who has the greatest amount of intellectual resources is in the least danger from inferior temptations,—if for no other reason, because he has fewer idle moments. The ruin of most men dates from some vacant hour. Occupation is the armour of the soul; and the train of Idleness is borne up by all the vices. I remember a satirical poem, in which the Devil is represented as fishing for men, and adapting his baits to the taste and temperament of his prey; but the idler, he said, pleased him most, because he bit the naked hook. To a young man away from home, friendless and forlorn in a great city, the hours of peril are those between sunset and bed time; for the moon and the stars see more of evil in a single hour than the sun in his whole day's circuit. The poet's visions of evening are all compact of tender and soothing images. It brings the wanderer to his home, the child to his mother's arms, the ox to his stall, and the weary labourer to his rest. But to the gentle-hearted youth who is thrown upon the rocks of a pitiless city, and stands "homeless among a thousand homes," the approach of evening brings with it an aching sense of loneliness and desolation, which comes down upon the spirit like darkness upon the earth. In this mood his best impulses become a snare to him; and he is led astray because he is social, affectionate, sympathetic, and warm-hearted. If there be a young man thus circumstanced within the sound of my voice, let me say to him that books are the friends of the friendless, and that a library is the home of the homeless. A taste for reading will always carry you into the best possible society, and enable you to converse with men who will instruct you by their wisdom, and charm you by their wit; who will soothe you when fretted, refresh you when weary, counsel you when perplexed, and sympathise with you at all times.—*Address to Mercantile Libry. Associatn., Boston.* 1850.

J. G. Whittier. *b.* 1808.

The Library.

"Let there be Light!" God spake of old,
And over chaos dark and cold,
And through the dead and formless frame
Of nature, life and order came.

Faint was the light at first that shone
On giant fern and mastodon,
On half-formed plant and beast of prey,
And man as rude and wild as they.

Age after age, like waves o'erran
The earth, uplifting brute and man;
And mind, at length, in symbols dark
Its meanings traced on stone and bark.

On leaf of palm, on sedge-wrought roll,
On plastic clay and leathern scroll,
Man wrote his thoughts; the ages passed,
And lo! the Press was found at last!

Then dead souls woke; the thoughts of men
Whose bones were dust revived again;
The cloister's silence found a tongue,
Old prophets spake, old poets sung.

And here, to-day, the dead look down,
The kings of mind again we crown;
We hear the voices lost so long,
The sage's word, the sybil's song.

Here Greek and Roman find themselves
Alive along these crowded shelves;
And Shakspere treads again his stage,
And Chaucer paints anew his age.

As if some Pantheon's marbles broke
Their stony trance, and lived and spoke,
Life thrills along the alcoved hall,
The lords of thought awake our call.

Sung at the opening of the Library at
Haverhill, Mass.

MRS. C. NORTON. 1808—1877.

To My Books.

Silent companions of the lonely hour,
Friends, who can never alter or forsake,
Who for inconstant roving have no power,
And all neglect, perforce, must calmly take,
Let me return to YOU ; this turmoil ending
Which worldly cares have in my spirit wrought,
And, o'er your old familiar pages bending,
Refresh my mind with many a tranquil thought :
Till, happily meeting there, from time to time,
Fancies, the audible echo of my own,
'Twill be like hearing in a foreign clime
My native language spoke in friendly tone,
And with a sort of welcome I shall dwell
On these, my unripe musings, told so well.

ROBERT ARIS WILLMOTT. 1809—1862.

An affecting instance of the tenderness and the compensations of Learning is furnished by the old age of Usher, when no spectacles could help his failing sight, and a book was dark except beneath the strongest light of the window. Hopeful and resigned he continued his task, following the sun from room to room through the house he lived in, until the shadows of the trees disappeared from the grass, and the day was gone. How strange and delightful must have been his feelings, when the sunbeam fell brilliantly upon some half-remembered passage, and thought after thought shone out from the misty words, like the features of a familiar landscape in a clearing fog.—*Pleasures, Objects, and Advantages of Literature.*

HENRY REED (AMERICAN PROFESSOR).

1808—1854.

It is not unfrequently thought that the true guidance for habits of reading is to be looked for in prescribed courses of reading, pointing out the books to be read, and the order of proceeding with them. Now, while this external guidance may to a certain extent be useful, I do believe that an elaborately prescribed course of reading would be found neither desirable nor practicable. It does not leave freedom enough to the movements of the reader's own mind; it does not give free enough scope to choice. Our communion with books, to be intelligent, must be more or less spontaneous. It is not possible to anticipate how or when an interest may be awakened in some particular subject or author, and it would be far better to break away from the prescribed list of books, in order to follow out that interest while it is a thoughtful impulse. It would be a sorry tameness of intellect that would not, sooner or later, work its way out of the track of the best of any such prescribed courses. . . .

I apprehend that often a taste for reading is quenched by rigid and injudicious prescription of books in which the mind takes no interest, can assimilate nothing to itself, and recognises no progress but what the eye takes count of in the reckoning of pages it has travelled over. But reverse the process: observe or engender the interest as best you may, in the young mind, and then work with that—expanding, cultivating, chastening it.—*Lectures on English Literature.*

E. Barrett Browning. 1809—1861.

Mr. Kenyon calls me his "omnivorous cousin." I read without principle. I have a sort of unity, but it amalgamates instead of selecting.

When I had read the Hebrew Bible right through, and the Greek poets and Plato from end to end, I passed as thoroughly through the flood of all possible and impossible British and foreign novels and romances, with slices of metaphysics laid thick between the sorrows of the multitudinous Celestinas. It is only useful knowledge and the multiplication table I never tried hard at. Is this matter of exultation? Alas, no!

Do I boast of my omnivorousness of reading, even apart from the romances? Certainly no!—never, except in joke. It's against my theories and ratiocinations, which take upon themselves to assert that we *all* generally err by *reading too much*, and out of proportion to what we *think*. I should be wiser, I am persuaded, if I had not read half as much—should have had stronger and better exercised faculties. The fact is, that the *ne plus ultra* of intellectual indolence is this reading of books. It comes next to what the Americans call "whittling."—*Letter to R. H. Horne*, 1843.

Or else I sate on in my chamber green,
And lived my life, and thought my thoughts,
and prayed
My prayers without the vicar; read my books,
Without considering whether they were fit
To do me good. Mark, there. We get no good
By being ungenerous, even to a book,
And calculating profits,—so much help

By so much reading. It is rather when
We gloriously forget ourselves and plunge
Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—
'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

. . . . . .

Books, books, books!
I had found the secret of a garret-room
Piled high with cases in my father's name,
Piled high, packed large,—where, creeping in and out
Among the giant fossils of my past,
Like some small nimble mouse between the ribs
Of a mastodon, I nibbled here and there
At this or that box, pulling through the gap,
In heats of terror, haste, victorious joy,
The first book first. And how I felt it beat
Under my pillow, in the morning's dark,
An hour before the sun would let me read!
My books! At last because the time was ripe,
I chanced upon the poets.

Aurora Leigh.

JOHN HILL BURTON. 1809—1881.

As to collectors, it is quite true that they do not in general read their books successively straight through, and the practice of desultory reading, as it is sometimes termed, must be treated as part of their case, and if a failing, one cognate with their habit of collecting. They are notoriously addicted to the practice of standing arrested on some round of a ladder, where, having mounted up for some certain book, they have by wayward chance fallen upon another, in which, at the first opening, has come up a passage which fascinates the finder as the eye of the Ancient Mariner fascinated the wedding-guest, and compels him to stand there, poised on his uneasy perch, and read. Peradventure the matter so perused suggests another passage in some other volume which it will be satisfactory and interesting to find, and so another and another search is made, while the hours pass by unnoticed, and the day seems all too short for the pursuit which is a luxury and an enjoyment, at the same time that it fills the mind with varied knowledge and wisdom.—*The Book-Hunter: "The Desultory Reader, or Bohemian of Literature."*

To every man of our Saxon race endowed with full health and strength, there is committed, as if it were the price he pays for these blessings, the custody of a restless demon, for which he is doomed to find ceaseless excitement, either in honest work, or some less profitable or more mischievous occupation. Countless have been the projects devised by the wit of man to open up for this fiend fields of exertion great enough for the absorption of its tireless energies, and none of them is more hopeful than the great world of books, if the demon is docile enough to be coaxed into it. Then will its erratic restlessness be sobered by the immensity of the sphere of exertion, and the consciousness that, however vehemently and however long it may struggle, the resources set before it will not be exhausted when the life to which it is attached shall have faded away; and hence, instead of dreading the languor of inaction, it will have to summon all its resources of promptness and activity to get over any considerable portion of the ground within the short space allotted to the life of man.—*The Book-Hunter: "The Collector and the Scholar."*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

b. 1809.

Society is a strong solution of books. It draws the virtue out of what is best worth reading, as hot water draws the strength of tea-leaves. If I were a prince, I would hire or buy a private literary tea-pot, in which I would steep all the leaves of new books that promised well. The infusion would do for me without the vegetable fibre. You understand me; I would have a person whose sole business should be to read day and night, and talk to me whenever I wanted him to. I know the man I would have: a quick-witted, out-spoken, incisive fellow; knows history, or at any rate has a shelf full of books about it, which he can use handily, and the same of all useful arts and sciences; knows all the common plots of plays and novels, and the stock company of characters that are continually coming on in new costume; can give you a criticism of an octavo in an epithet and a wink, and you can depend on it; cares for nobody except for the virtue there is in what he says; delights in taking off big-wigs and professional gowns, and in the disembalming and unbandaging of all literary mummies. Yet he is as tender and reverential to all that bears the mark of genius—that is, of a new influx of truth or beauty—as a nun over her missal. In short, he is one of those men that know everything except how to make a living. Him would I keep on the square next my own royal compartment on life's chessboard. To him I would push up another pawn, in the shape of a comely and wise young woman, whom he would, of course, take—to wife. For all contingencies I would liberally provide. In a word, I would, in the plebeian, but expressive phrase, "put him through" all the material part of life; see him sheltered, warmed, fed, button-mended, and all that, just to be able to lay on his talk when I liked—with the privilege of shutting it off at will.

. . . . . .

I believe in reading, in a large proportion, by subjects rather than by authors. Some books must be read tasting, as it were, every word. Tennyson will bear that as Milton would, as Gray would—for they tasted every word themselves as Ude or Carême would taste a *potage* meant for a king or a queen. But once become familiar with a subject, so as to know what you wish to learn about it, and you can read a page as a flash of lightning reads it.

. . . . . .

I like books, I was born and bred among them, and have the easy feeling, when I get into their presence, that a stable-boy has among horses. I don't think I undervalue them either as companions or as instructors. But I can't help remembering that the world's great men have not commonly been great scholars, nor its great scholars great men. The Hebrew patriarchs had small libraries, I think, if any; yet they represent to our imaginations a very complete idea of manhood, and I think, if we could ask in Abraham to dine with us men of letters next Saturday, we should feel honoured by his company.

What I wanted to say about books is this: that there are times in which every active mind feels itself above any and all human books.

. . . . .

You talk about reading Shakspeare, using him as an expression for the highest intellect, and you wonder that any common person should be so presumptuous as to suppose his thought can rise above the text which lies before him. But think a moment. A child's reading of Shakspeare is one thing, and Coleridge's or Schlegel's reading of him is another. The saturation-point of each mind differs from that of every other. But I think it is as true for the small mind which can only take up a little as for the great one which takes up much, that the suggested trains of thought and feeling ought always to rise above—not the author, but the reader's mental version of the author, whoever he may be.

I think most readers of Shakspeare sometimes find themselves thrown into exalted mental conditions like those produced by music. Then they may drop the book, to pass at once into the region of thought without words. We may happen to be very dull folks, you and I, and probably are, unless there is some particular reason to suppose the contrary. But we get glimpses now and then of a sphere of spiritual possibilities, where we, dull as we are now, may sail in vast circles round the largest compass of earthly intelligences.

. . . . . .

I always believed in life rather than in books. I suppose every day of earth, with its hundred thousand deaths and something more of births,—with its loves and hates, its triumphs and defeats, its pangs and blisses, has more of humanity in it than all the books that were ever written, put together. I believe the flowers growing at this moment send up more fragrance to heaven than was ever exhaled from all the essences ever distilled.

. . . . . .

Books are the *negative* pictures of thought, and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images, the more nicely the finest lines are reproduced.—*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, M.D.*

Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble, at a touch; nay, you may kick it about all day, like a football, and it will be round and full at evening. Does not Mr. Bryant say, that Truth gets well if she is run over by a locomotive, while Error dies of lockjaw if she scratches her finger? I never heard that a mathematician was alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition. I think, generally, that fear of open discussion implies feebleness of inward conviction, and great sensitiveness to the expression of individual opinion is a mark of weakness.—*The Professor at the Breakfast-Table.*

The first thing, naturally, when one enters a scholar's study or library, is to look at his books. One gets a notion very speedily of his tastes and the range of his pursuits by a glance round his book-shelves.

Of course, you know there are many fine houses where the library is a part of the upholstery, so to speak. Books in handsome binding kept locked under plate-glass in showy dwarf book-cases are as important to stylish establishments as servants in livery, who sit with folded arms, are to stylish equipages. I suppose those wonderful statues with the folded arms do sometimes change their attitude, and I suppose those books with the gilded backs do sometimes get opened, but it is nobody's business whether they do or not, and it is not best to ask too many questions.

This sort of thing is common enough, but there is another case that may prove deceptive if you undertake to judge from appearances. Once in a while you will come on a house where you will find a family of readers and almost no library. Some of the most indefatigable devourers of literature have very few books. They belong to book clubs, they haunt the public libraries, they borrow of friends, and somehow or other get hold of everything they want, scoop out all it holds for them, and have done with it. When *I* want a book, it is as a tiger wants a sheep. I must have it with one spring, and, if I miss it, go away defeated and hungry. And my experience with public libraries is that the first volume of the book I inquire for is out, unless I happen to want the second, when *that* is out.

. . . . . .

Yes,—he said,—I have a kind of notion of the way in which a library ought to be put together—no, I don't mean that, I mean ought to grow. I don't pretend to say that mine is a model, but it serves my turn well enough, and it represents me pretty accurately. A scholar must shape his own shell, *secrete* it, for secretion is only separation, you know, of certain elements derived from the materials of the world about us. And a scholar's study is his shell. . . . Of course I must have my literary *harem*, my *parc aux cerfs*, where my favorites await my moments of leisure and pleasure,—my scarce and precious editions, my luxurious typographical masterpieces; my Delilahs, that take my head in their lap; secret treasures that nobody else knows anything about; books, in short, that I like for insufficient reasons it may be, but peremptorily, and mean to like and to love and to cherish till death us do part.—*The Poet at the Breakfast-Table.*

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE. *b.* 1809.

Sometimes when I sit quietly and muse
  On bygone times and long departed joys,
  I hear with startling clearness thy loved voice
In sudden ringing laugh, that still renews
An echo of my then delight to use
  Whatever wile might win that pleasant noise
  Of heartfelt mirth from thee: the veriest toys
Of fancy served to please us and amuse.
  Our own old favourite books read o'er and o'er
Ne'er failed to charm again and yet again:
  We freshly savoured all the pith and core
Of jests from Sheridan's or Molière's brain;
  Jack Falstaff's racy wit ne'er lost its zest,
  And Shakespeare's fun we always found the best.

Honey from the Weed: "To her Husband."

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

b. 1809.

Be slow to stir enquiries which you do not mean particularly to pursue to their proper end. Be not afraid to suspend your judgment, or feel and admit to yourself how narrow are the bounds of knowledge. Do not too readily assume that to us have been opened royal roads to truth, which were heretofore hidden from the whole family of man; for the opening of such roads would not be so much favour as caprice. If it is bad to yield a blind submission to authority, it is not less an error to deny to it its reasonable weight. Eschewing a servile adherence to the past, regard with reverence and gratitude, and accept its accumulations in inward as well as outward things, as the patrimony which it is your part in life both to preserve and to improve.—*Speech at Distribution of Prizes to the Pupils of Liverpool College*, 1872.

One who is now beginning at any rate to descend the hill of life naturally looks backwards as well as forwards, and we must be becoming conscious that the early part of this century has witnessed in this and other countries, what will be remembered in future times as a splendid literary age. The elder among us have lived in the lifetime of many great men who have passed to their rest; the younger have heard them familiarly spoken of, and still have their works in their hands, as I trust they will continue to be in the hands of all generations. I am afraid we cannot hope that literature—it would be contrary to all the experience of former times were we to hope—should be equably sustained at that extraordinary high level which belongs, roughly speaking, to the first fifty years after the Peace of 1815. That was a great period in England, in Germany, in France, and in Italy. I think we can hardly hope that it should continue on a perfect level at so high an elevation. Undoubtedly the cultivation of literature will ever be dear to the people of this country; but we must remember what is literature, and what is not. In the first place, we should be all agreed that *book-making* is not literature. The business of book-making, I have no doubt, may thrive, and will be continued upon a constantly extending scale from year to year. But that we may put aside. For my own part, if I am to look a little forward, what I anticipate for the remainder of the century is an age, not so much of literature proper—not so much of great, permanent, and splendid additions to those works in which beauty is embodied as an essential condition of production,—but I rather look forward to an age of research! This is an age of great research, in science, in history, in all the branches of enquiry that throw light upon the former condition, whether of our race, or of the world which it inhabits; and it may be hoped that, even if the remaining years of the century be not so brilliant as some of its former periods, in the production of works, great in themselves, and immortal, still they may add largely to the knowledge of mankind. And if they make such additions to the knowledge of mankind, they will be preparing materials of a new tone and of new splendour in the realm of literature. There is a sunrise and a sunset. There is a transition from the light of the sun to the gentler light of the moon. There is a rest in Nature which seems necessary in all her great operations. And so with all the great operations of the human mind. But do not let us despond if we seem to see a diminished efficacy in the production of what is essentially and immortally great. Our sun is hidden only for a moment. He is like the day-star of Milton, which

> "Anon repairs his drooping head
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky."

Speech at the Royal Academy Dinner, 1877.

It was said of Socrates that he called down philosophy from heaven. But the enterprise of certain enlightened publishers has taught them to work for the million, and that is a very important fact. When I was a boy I used to be fond of looking into a bookseller's shop, but there was nothing to be seen there that was accessible to the working man of that day. Take a Shakspeare, for example. I remember very well that I gave £2. 16s. 0d. for my first copy; but you can get an admirable copy for 3s. Those books are accessible now which formerly were quite inaccessible. We may be told that you want amusement, but that does not include improvement. There are a set of worthless books written now and at times which you should avoid; which profess to give amusement; but in reading the works of such authors as Shakspeare and Scott there is the greatest possible amusement in its best form. Do you suppose when you see men engaged in study that they dislike it? No. There is labour no doubt of a certain kind—mental labour, but it is so associated with interest all along that it is forgotten in the light it carries in its performance, and no people know that better than the working classes. I want you to understand that multitudes of books are constantly being prepared and placed within reach of the population at large, for the most part executed by writers of a high stamp having subjects of the greatest interest, and which enable you, at a moderate price, not to get cheap literature which is secondary in its quality, but to go straight into the very heart—if I may so say, into the sanctuary of the temple of literature—and become acquainted with the greatest and best works that men of our country have produced. It is not to be supposed that working-men, on coming home from labour, are to study Euclid and works of that character; and it is not to be desired unless in the case of very special gifts; but what is to be desired is that some effort should be made by men of all classes, and perhaps by none more than the labouring class, to lift ourselves above the level of what is purely frivolous, and to endeavour to find our amusement in making ourselves acquainted with things of real interest and beauty.—*Speech in aid of the Backley Institute and Reading Room*, 1878.

Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes). 1809—1885.

I think it impossible to overrate the political utility of such an institution as this. Think what a book is—what each one of these volumes is. It is a portion of the eternal mind, caught in its process through the world, stamped in an instant, and preserved for eternity. Think what it is; that enormous amount of human sympathy and intelligence that is contained in these volumes; and think what it is that this sympathy should be communicated to the masses of the people. Compare the state of the man who is really well acquainted with the whole past of literature upon the subject on which he is speaking, and with which his mind is embued, with that of the solitary artisan, upon whom, perhaps, the light of genius has dawned in some great truth—in some noble aspiration—in some high idea—resting there, unable to accomplish itself, unable to realise its meaning, and probably ending in nothing but discontent or despair. Compare the state of that man, such as he would be without books, with what that man may be with books. So that it is only books that can save him from the most exaggerated conclusions, from the falsest doctrines, and all those evils which may damage and even destroy the masses of mankind. It is only, remember, what lies in these books that makes all the difference between the wildest socialism* that ever passed into the mind of a man in this hall, and the deductions and careful processes of the mind of the student who will sit at these tables—who will learn humility by seeing what others have taught before him; and who will gain from the sympathy of ages, intelligence and sense for himself.—*Speech at the Inauguration of the Manchester Free Library, September* 2, 1852.

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* The building in which the Free Library was first located was previously a Socialist Hall.

THEODORE PARKER. 1810—1860.

The pleasures of the intellect not creative, but only recipient, have never been fully appreciated. What a joy is there in a good book, writ by some great master of thought, who breaks into beauty, as in summer the meadow into grass and dandelions and violets, with geraniums, and manifold sweetness. As an amusement, that of reading is worth all the rest. What pleasure in science, in literature, in poetry, for any man who will but open his eye and his heart to take it in. What delight an audience of men who never speak, take in some great orator, who looks into their faces, and speaks into their hearts, and then rains a meteoric shower of stars, falling from his heaven of genius before their eyes; or, far better still, with a whole day of sunlight warms his audience, so that every manly and womanly excellence in them buds and blossoms with fragrance, one day to bear most luscious fruit before God, fruit for mortality, fruit for eternity not less. I once knew a hard-working man, a farmer and mechanic, who in the winter-nights rose a great while before day, and out of the darkness coaxed him at least two hours of hard study, and then when the morning peeped over the eastern hills, he yoked his oxen and went forth to his daily work, or in his shop he laboured all day long; and when the night came, he read aloud some simple book to his family; but when they were snugly laid away in their sleep, the great-minded mechanic took to his hard study anew; and so, year out and year in, he went on, neither rich nor much honoured, hardly entreated by daily work, and yet he probably had a happiness in his heart and mind which the whole county might have been proud to share.

I fear we do not know what a power of immediate pleasure and permanent profit is to be had in a good book. The books which help you most are those which make you think the most. The hardest way of learning is by easy reading; every man that tries it finds it so. But a great book that comes from a great thinker,—it is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth, with beauty too. It sails the ocean, driven by the winds of heaven, breaking the level sea of life into beauty where it goes, leaving behind it a train of sparkling loveliness, widening as the ship goes on. And what treasures it brings to every land, scattering the seeds of truth, justice, love, and piety, to bless the world in ages yet to come.—*Lessons from The World of Matter and The World of Man.*

JOHN BROWN. 1810—1882.

If our young medical student would take our advice, and for an hour or two twice a week take up a volume of Shakspeare, Cervantes, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Cowper, Montaigne, Addison, Defoe, Goldsmith, Fielding, Scott, Charles Lamb, Macaulay, Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, Helps, Thackeray, &c., not to mention authors on deeper and more sacred subjects—they would have happier and healthier minds, and make none the worse doctors. If they, by good fortune—for the tide has set in strong against the *literæ humaniores*—have come off with some Greek or Latin, we would supplicate for an ode of Horace, a couple of pages of Cicero or of Pliny once a month, and a page of Xenophon. French and German should be mastered either before or during the first years of study. They will never afterwards be acquired so easily or so thoroughly, and the want of them may be bitterly felt when too late.

But one main help, we are persuaded, is to be found in studying, and by this we do not mean the mere reading, but the digging into and through, the energizing upon, and mastering such books as we have mentioned at the close of this paper.* These are not, of course, the only works we would recommend to those who wish to understand thoroughly, and to make up their minds, on these great subjects as wholes; but we all know too well that our Art is long, broad, and deep,—and Time, opportunity, and our little hour, brief and uncertain, therefore, we would recommend those books as a sort of game of the mind, a mental exercise—like cricket, a gymnastic, a clearing of the eyes of their mind as with euphrasy, a strengthening their power over particulars, a getting fresh, strong views of worn out, old things, and, above all, a learning the right use of their reason, and by knowing their own ignorance and weakness, finding true knowledge and strength. Taking up a book like Arnauld, and reading a chapter of his lively, manly sense, is like taking a run to the top of Arthur Seat. Exertion quickens your pulse, expands your lungs, makes your blood warmer and redder, fills your mouth with the pure waters of relish, strengthens and supples your legs; and you come down the hill a happier, a better, and a hungrier man, and of a better mind.—*Horæ Subsecivæ: "With Brains, Sir!"*

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* 1. Arnauld's Port-Royal Logic; translated by T. S. Baynes.—2. Thomson's Outlines of the Necessary Laws of Thought.—3. Descartes on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences.—4. Coleridge's Essay on Method.—5. Whately's Logic and Rhetoric; new and cheap edition.—6. Mill's Logic; new and cheap edition.—7. Dugald Stewart's Outlines.—8. Sir John Herschel's Preliminary Dissertation.—9. Quarterly Review, vol. lxviii.; Article upon Whewell's Philosophy of Inductive Sciences.—10. Isaac Taylor's Elements of Thought.—11. Sir William Hamilton's edition of Reid; Dissertations; and Lectures.—12. Professor Fraser's Rational Philosophy.—13. Locke on the Conduct of the Understanding.

SAMUEL LAING. *b.* 1810.

For all, but especially for the young, there is no help to self-improvement so great as to read good books in a generous spirit; and nothing which dwarfs the mind so much as to debauch it by frivolous reading, and by the moral dram-drinking of sensational rubbish, until it loses all natural and healthy appetite for the pure and elevated.—*Modern Science and Modern Thought*, 1885.

W. M. THACKERAY. 1811—1863.

Novels are sweets. All people with healthy literary appetites love them—almost all women; a vast number of clever, hard-headed men, judges, bishops, chancellors, mathematicians, are notorious novel-readers, as well as young boys and sweet girls, and their kind, tender mothers.—*Roundabout Papers: "On a Lazy, Idle Boy."*

Then, above all, we had Walter Scott, the kindly, the generous, the pure—the companion of what countless delightful hours; the purveyor of how much happiness; the friend whom we recall as the constant benefactor of our youth! How well I remember the type and the brownish paper of the old duodecimo, "Tales of My Landlord!" . . . Oh! for a half-holiday, a quiet corner, and one of those books again! Those books, and perhaps those eyes with which we read them; and, it may be, the brains behind the eyes! It may be the tart was good; but how fresh the appetite was! . . . The boy critic loves the story; grown up, he loves the author who wrote the story. Hence the kindly tie is established between writer and reader, and lasts pretty nearly for life.—*Roundabout Papers: "De Juventute."*

JOHN BRIGHT. *b.* 1811.

What is a great love of books? It is something like a personal introduction to the great and good men of all past times. Books, it is true, are silent as you see them on their shelves; but, silent as they are, when I enter a library I feel as if almost the dead were present, and I know if I put questions to these books they will answer me with all the faithfulness and fulness which has been left in them by the great men who have left the books with us. Have none of us, or may I not say are there any of us who have not, felt some of this feeling when in a great library? When you are within its walls, and see these shelves, these thousands of volumes, and consider for a moment who they are that wrote them, who has gathered them together, for whom they are intended, how much wisdom they contain, what they tell the future ages, it is impossible not to feel something of solemnity and tranquillity when you are spending time in rooms like these; and if you come to houses of less note you find libraries that are of great estimation and which in a less degree are able to afford mental aliment to those who are connected with them; and I am bound to say—and if anyone cares very much for anything else they will not blame me—I say to them, you may have in a house costly pictures and costly ornaments, and a great variety of decoration, yet, so far as my judgment goes, I would prefer to have one comfortable room well stocked with books to all you can give me in the way of decoration which the highest art can supply. The only subject of lamentation is—one feels that always, I think, in the presence of a library—that life is too short, and I am afraid I must say also that our industry is so far deficient that we seem to have no hope of a full enjoyment of the ample repast that is spread before us. In the houses of the humble a little library in my opinion is a most precious possession. . . .

Some twenty years ago I was in Sutherlandshire, on the Helmsdale river, engaged in the healthful occupation of endeavouring to get some salmon out of it. In the course of the day, walking down the river, I entered the cottage of a shepherd. There was no one at home, I think, but the shepherd's wife or mother, I forget which, but she was an elderly woman, matronly, very kind and very courteous to us. Whilst I was in the house I saw upon the window-sill a small and very thin volume, and I took the liberty of going up to it, and taking it in my hand, I found, to my surprise and delight, that it was an edition which I had never met with before—an edition of "Paradise Regained"—the work of a poet unsurpassed in any country or in any age, and a poem as to which I believe great authorities admit that if "Paradise Lost" did not exist "Paradise Regained" would be the finest poem in our language. I said I was surprised and delighted down in this remote country, in this solitary house, in this humble abode of the shepherd, I found this volume which seemed to me to transfigure the cottage. I felt as if that humble dwelling was illumined, as it was, indeed, by the genius of Milton, and, I may say, I took the liberty of asking how the volume came there, and who it was that read it. I learned that the good woman of the house had a son who had been brought up for the ministry, and I think at the time I was there he was then engaged in his labours as a Presbyterian minister in the colony of Canada. Now whenever I think of some of the rivers of Scotland, when I think of the river Helmsdale, if I turn, as my mind does, to that cottage, I always see, and shall never forget, that small, thin volume which I found on the window-sill, and the finding of which seemed to me to lift the dwellers in that cottage to a somewhat higher sphere. . . . My own impression is that there is no greater blessing that can be given to an artisan's family than a love of books. The home influence of such a possession is one which will guard them from many temptations and from many evils. How common it is—in all classes too common—but how common it is amongst what are termed the working classes—I have seen it many times in my district—where even an industrious and careful parent has found that his son or his daughter has been to him a source of great trouble and pain. No doubt, if it were possible, even in one of these homes, to have one single person who was a lover of books, and knew how to spend an evening usefully with a book, and who could occasionally read something from the book to the rest of the family, perhaps to his aged parents, how great would be the blessing to the family, how great a safeguard would be afforded; and then to the men themselves, when they come to the feebleness of age, and when they can no longer work, and when the sands of life are as it were ebbing out, what can be more advantageous, what more a blessing, than in these years of feebleness—may be sometimes of suffering—it must be often of solitude—if there be the power to derive instruction and amusement and refreshment from books which our great library will offer to every one? To the young especially this is of great importance, for if there be no seed-time, there will certainly be no harvest, and the youth of life is the seed-time of life. It is impossible for anybody to confer upon young men a greater blessing than to stimulate them to a firm belief that to them now, and to them during all their lives, it may be a priceless gain that they should associate themselves constantly with this library, and draw from it any books they like. The more they read the more in all probability they will like and wish to read. What can be better than that the fair poetic page, the great instructions of history, the gains of science—all these are laid before us, and of these we may freely partake.—*Speech at opening of Birmingham New Free Library, June* 1, 1882.

LORD SHERBROOKE (ROBERT LOWE).

b. 1811.

Cultivate above all things a taste for reading. There is no pleasure so cheap, so innocent, and so remunerative as the real, hearty pleasure and taste for reading. It does not come to everyone naturally. Some people take to it naturally, and others do not; but I advise you to cultivate it, and endeavour to promote it in your minds. In order to do that you should read what amuses you and pleases you. You should not begin with difficult works, because, if you do, you will find the pursuit dry and tiresome. I would even say to you read novels, read frivolous books, read anything that will amuse you and give you a taste for reading. On this point all persons could put themselves on an equality. Some persons would say they would rather spend their time in society; but it must be remembered that if they had cultivated a taste for reading beforehand they would be in a position to choose their society, whereas, if they had not, the probabilities were that they would have to mix with people inferior to themselves. I hold that the English language is the richest in the world in all the noblest efforts of the human intellect. Our historians and orators might rank with those of any nation and clime, and there is hardly any subject which you could not find fully and properly treated. Therefore I advise you, in the first instance, to give your minds very much to the study of English, and of the admirable works to be found in that language.—*Speech to the Students of the Croydon Science and Art Schools,* 1869.

CHARLES SUMNER (AMERICAN SENATOR).

1811—1874.

He [John Pickering] knew that scholarship of all kinds would gild the life of its possessor, enlarge the resources of the bar, enrich the voice of the pulpit, and strengthen the learning of medicine. He knew that it would afford a soothing companionship in hours of relaxation from labor, in periods of sadness, and in the evening of life; that, when once embraced, it was more constant than friendship,—attending its votary, as an invisible spirit, in the toils of the day, the watches of the night, the changes of travel, and the alternations of fortune or health.—*Oration in* 1846.

I might fitly speak to you of books; and here, while considering principles to govern the student in his reading, it would be pleasant to dwell on the profitable delights, better than a "shower of cent per cent," on the society, better than fashion or dissipation, and on that completeness of satisfaction, outvying the possession of wealth, and making the "library dukedom large enough,"—all of which are found in books.—*Address on Granville Sharp in* 1854.

JOHN CAMERON. *b.* about 1812.

But now—What of books as instruments for the evolution of latent mental power? Books abound—they over-abound; there is nothing of which we have so unmanageable a superfluity; their distracting variety makes it difficult to choose, and hard to hold to those even that we have chosen till we have inwardly digested them. Education is in the ratio of difficulty overcome. The best book, therefore, in this regard, is that which puts the utmost strain upon your faculty of meditation. Choose the thinker who forces you to wrestle with him—lifts you off your feet—but to set you down on a higher level than you stood on before you grappled with him. A hundred writers that you can at a hop, step, and jump, lightly overleap, will not so avail to make you a philosophical acrobat, as one that you will, even at the hundredth attempt, find too high for you to leap over.—*Phases of Thought, by John Cameron, author of "The Notabilities of Wakefield;" "Discourses;" &c.*

FRANCIS BENNOCH. *b.* 1812.

My Books.

I love my books as drinkers love their wine;
The more I drink, the more they seem divine;
With joy elate my soul in love runs o'er,
And each fresh draught is sweeter than before!
Books bring me friends where'er on earth I be,
Solace of solitude,—bonds of society!

I love my books! they are companions dear,
Sterling in worth, in friendship most sincere;
Here talk I with the wise in ages gone,
And with the nobly gifted of our own:
If love, joy, laughter, sorrow please my mind,
Love, joy, grief, laughter in my books I find.

The Storm and other Poems.

GEORGE GILFILLAN. 1813—1878.

Let us compare the different ways in which Crabbe and Foster (certainly a *prose* poet) deal with a library. Crabbe describes minutely and successfully the outer features of the volumes, their colours, clasps, the stubborn ridges of their bindings, the illustrations which adorn them, so well that you feel yourself among them, and they become sensible to touch almost as to sight. But there he stops, and sadly fails, we think, in bringing out the living and moral interest which gathers around a multitude of books, or even around a single volume. This Foster has amply done. The speaking silence of a number of books, where, though it were the wide Bodleian or Vatican, not one whisper could be heard, and yet where, as in an antechamber, so many great spirits are waiting to deliver their messages — their churchyard stillness continuing even when their readers are moving to their pages, in joy or agony, as to the sound of martial instruments—their awaking, as from deep slumber, to speak with miraculous organ, like the shell which has only to be lifted, and "pleased it remembers its august abodes, and murmurs as the ocean murmurs there"—their power of drawing tears, kindling blushes, awakening laughter, calming or quickening the motions of the life's-blood, lulling to repose, or rousing to restlessness—the meaning which radiates from their quiet countenances—the tale of shame or glory which their title-pages tell—the memories suggested by the character of their authors, and of the readers who have throughout successive centuries perused them—the thrilling thoughts excited by the sight of names and notes inscribed on their margins or blank pages by hands long since mouldered in the dust, or by those dear to us as our life's-blood, who had been snatched from our sides—the aspects of gaiety or of gloom connected with the bindings and the age of volumes—the effects of sunshine playing as if on a congregation of happy faces, making the duskiest shine, and the gloomiest be glad—or of shadow suffusing a sombre air over all—the joy of the proprietor of a large library, who feels that Nebuchadnezzar watching great Babylon, or Napoleon reviewing his legions, will not stand comparison with himself seated amid the broad maps, and rich prints, and numerous volumes which his wealth has enabled him to collect, and his wisdom entitled him to enjoy—all such hieroglyphics of interest and meaning has Foster included and interpreted in one gloomy but noble meditation, and his introduction to Doddridge is the true "Poem on the Library."—*Gallery of Literary Portraits: "George Crabbe."*

CHARLES BRAY. 1811—1884.

Habit is as supreme in mind as in body, and the object of moral culture is to make virtue into a habit. There are two habits, which, although they have not yet been classed among the virtues, are yet each worth a fortune in itself. One is a habit of looking at the bright side of things; the other is a taste for good reading, which may be formed into a habit by cultivation. I have cultivated both, on principle, and my happiness is now mainly dependent upon them. The habitual state of my mind is one of cheerfulness, which the external world now finds it very difficult to depress. However untoward outside things may be, my mind soon springs back to its natural state, which is a happy one. For this I claim no merit; I cannot help it; the mind does so unconsciously, and this, I maintain, is the effect of culture, and is dependent in great measure upon the way I have accustomed myself to look at things. . . . Carlyle, in his "Reminiscences of his Father," vol. i., p. 9., says, "A virtue he had which I should learn to imitate. He *never spoke of what was disagreeable and past.* I have often wondered and admired at this. The thing that he had nothing to do with, he did nothing with." I took people for what they were, and was not annoyed that they were not better; consequently I gave no admission to envy, hatred, malice, or any kind of uncharitableness. . . . I knew there was good in all, and I appealed to that when I could find it, and if I could not find it, or if people, whether good or bad, were distasteful to me, and tended to create bad feeling in me, I kept out of their way. It may have been cowardly, but I dodged the evil rather than contend; I did not see that anyone had a right to disturb my habitual calm. It is better to wait, if you can, and many evils will cure themselves, or you will get used to the new circumstances. As the Spanish proverb says, "If you cannot have what you like, you must try to like what you have." I always tried never to look at what I had lost, but at what I had left. . . . The tone of mind, as to whether joy or sorrow shall habitually prevail, depends upon culture; and culture means exercise, and exercise begets habit, and in this case, habitual cheerfulness is the result.

. . . . . .

The second thing upon which my happiness has been greatly dependent, is the taste for good reading. By good reading I mean not mere newspapers, magazines, novels, and light literature, but such first-class works as enable you to travel not only over the whole world of nature, but of thought. A man who has acquired such a taste has never a spare moment or a dull one, unless when dreadfully bored by society, from which he escapes as much as possible. We ought always to have a good book on hand which we *make time* to read every day.

. . . . . .

As regards my present condition, I never have a minute to spare, or a minute that I cannot fill pleasurably. I have a heap of books for every varied mood, so that they never bore me. Books to me, that is those of our best writers, are ever new; the books may be the same, but *I* am changed. Every seven years gives me a different, often a higher, appreciation of those I like. Every *good* book is worth reading three times at least.—*Phases of Opinion and Experience During a Long Life. An Autobiography, by Charles Bray, Author of The "Philosophy of Necessity," &c.*

HENRY WARD BEECHER. 1813—1887.

We form judgments of men from little things about their houses, of which the owner, perhaps, never thinks. In earlier years when travelling in the West, where taverns were scarce, and in some places unknown, and every settler's house was a house of entertainment, it was a matter of some importance and some experience to select wisely where you should put up. And we always looked for flowers. If there were no trees for shade, no patch of flowers in the yard, we were suspicious of the place. But no matter how rude the cabin, or rough the surroundings, if we saw that the window held a little trough for flowers, and that some vines twined about strings let down from the eaves, we were confident that there was some taste and carefulness in the log cabin. In a new country, where people have to tug for a living, no one will take the trouble to rear flowers unless the love of them is pretty strong; and this taste, blossoming out of plain and uncultivated people, is itself a clump of harebells growing out of the seams of a rock. We were seldom misled. A patch of flowers came to signify kind people, clean beds, and good bread. But in other states of society other signs are more significant. Flowers about a rich man's house may signify only that he has a good gardener, or that he has refined neighbours, and does what he sees them do.

But men are not accustomed to buy *books* unless they want them. If on visiting the dwelling of a man in slender means we find that he contents himself with cheap carpets and very plain furniture in order that he may purchase books, he rises at once in our esteem. Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house. The plainest row of books that cloth or paper ever covered is more significant of refinement than the most elaborately carved étagère or sideboard. Give us a house furnished with books rather than furniture.

Both, if you can, but books at any rate! To spend several days in a friend's house, and hunger for something to read, while you are treading on costly carpets, and sitting on luxuriant chairs, and sleeping upon down, is as if one were bribing your body for the sake of cheating your mind. Is it not pitiable to see a man growing rich, augmenting the comforts of home, and lavishing money on ostentatious upholstery, upon the table, upon everything but what the soul needs? We know of many, and many a rich man's house, where it would not be safe to ask for the commonest English Classics. A few garish Annuals on the table, a few pictorial monstrosities together with the stock religious books of his "persuasion," and that is all! No poets, no essayists, no historians, no travels or biographies,—no select fiction or curious legendary lore. But the wall paper cost three dollars a roll, and the carpet cost four dollars a yard!

Books are the windows through which the soul looks out. A home without books is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family. He cheats them! Children learn to read by being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge comes with reading and grows upon it. And the love of knowledge, in a young mind, is almost a warrant against the inferior excitement of passions and vices. Let us pity these poor rich men who live barrenly in great bookless houses! Let us congratulate the poor that, in our day, books are so cheap that a man may every year add a hundred volumes to his library for the price which his tobacco and his beer would cost him. Among the earliest ambitions to be excited in clerks, workmen, journeymen, and, indeed, among all that are struggling up in life from nothing to something, is that of forming and continually adding to a library of good books. A little library, growing larger every year, is an honourable part of a man's history. It is a man's duty to have books. A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessaries of life.—*Sermons.*

SARA P. PARTON (FANNY FERN).

1811—1872.

Oh! but books are such safe company! They keep your Secrets well; *they* never boast that they made your eyes glisten, or your cheek flush, or your heart throb. You may take up your favourite Author, and love him at a distance just as warmly as you like, for all the sweet fancies and glowing thoughts that have winged your lonely hours so fleetly and so sweetly. Then you may close the book, and lean your cheek against the cover, as if it were the face of a dear friend; shut your eyes and soliloquise to your heart's content, without fear of misconstruction, even though you should exclaim in the fulness of your enthusiasm, "What an *adorable soul that man has!*" You may put the volume under your pillow, and let your eye and the first ray of morning light fall on it together, and nothing shall rob you of that delicious pleasure. You may have a thousand petty, provoking, irritating annoyances through the day, and you shall come back again to your dear old book, and forget them all in dreamland. It shall be a friend that shall be always at hand; that shall never try you by caprice, or pain you by forgetfulness, or wound you by distrust.—*Fern Leaves.*

ANTHONY TROLLOPE. 1815—1882.

Now, my young friends, to whom I am addressing myself, with reference to this habit of reading, I make bold to tell you that it is your pass to the greatest, the purest, and the most perfect pleasures that God has prepared for his creatures. Other pleasures may be more ecstatic. When a young man looks into a girl's eye for love, and finds it there, nothing may afford him greater joy for the moment; when a father sees a son return after a long absence, it may be a great pleasure for the moment; but the habit of reading is the only enjoyment I know, in which there is no alloy. It lasts when all other pleasures fade. It will be there to support you when all other recreations are gone. It will be present to you when the energies of your body have fallen away from you. It will last you until your death. It will make your hours pleasant to you as long as you live. But, my friends, you cannot acquire that habit in your age. You cannot acquire it in middle age; you must do it now, when you are young. You must learn to read and to like reading now, or you cannot do so when you are old.—*Speech at the Opening of the Art Exhibition at the Bolton Mechanics' Institution, Dec.* 7, 1868.

MARK PATTISON. 1813—1884.

Those who most read books don't want to talk about them. The conversation of the man who reads to any purpose will be flavoured by his reading; but it will not be about his reading. The people who read in order to talk about it, are people who read the books of the season because they are the fashion—books which come in with the season and go out with it. "When a new book comes out I read an old one," said the poet Rogers. And Lord Dudley—the great Lord Dudley, not the present possessor of the title—writes to the Bishop of Llandaff: "I read new publications unwillingly. In literature I am fond of confining myself to the best company, which consists chiefly of my old acquaintance with whom I am desirous of becoming more intimate. I suspect that nine times out of ten it is more profitable, if not more agreeable, to read an old book over again than to read a new one for the first time. . . . Is it not better to try to elevate and endow one's mind by the constant study and contemplation of the great models, than merely to know of one's own knowledge that such a book a'nt worth reading?"—(*Lord Dudley's Letters.*)

. . . . . .

To a veteran like myself, who have watched the books of forty seasons, there is nothing so old as a new book. An astonishing sameness and want of individuality pervades modern books. The ideas they contain do not seem to have passed through the mind of the writer. They have not even that originality—the only originality which John Mill in his modesty would claim for himself—"which every thoughtful mind gives to its own mode of conceiving and expressing truths which are common property"—(*Autobiography*, p. 119). When you are in London step into the reading-room of the British Museum. There is the great manufactory out of which we turn the books of the season. It was so before there was any British Museum. It was so in Chaucer's time—

"For out of the olde fieldes, as men saythe,
Cometh all this newe corn from yere to yere,
And out of olde bookes in good faithe
Cometh all this newe science that men lere."

It continued to be so in Cervantes' day. "There are," says he in Don Quixote (32), "men who will make you books and turn them loose in the world with as much despatch as they would do a dish of fritters."

It is not, then, any wonder that De Quincey should account it "one of the misfortunes of life that one must read thousands of books only to discover that one need not have read them." . . . And I cannot doubt that Bishop Butler had observed the same phenomenon when he wrote, in 1729: "The great number of books of amusement which daily come in one's way, have in part occasioned this idle way of considering things. By this means time, even in solitude, is happily got rid of without the pain of attention; neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleness, one can scarce forbear saying is spent with less thought, than great part of that which is spent in reading."—*Books and Critics. A Lecture. Fortnightly Review, vol.* xxii., *p.* 659.

GEORGE SEARLE PHILLIPS (JANUARY SEARLE).

b. about 1816—*d.* about 1882.

Books are our household gods; and we cannot prize them too highly. They are the only gods in all the Mythologies that are ever beautiful and unchangeable; for they betray no man, and love their lovers. . . . Amongst the many things we have to be thankful for, as the result of modern discoveries, surely this of printed books is the highest of all; and I for one, am so sensible of its merits that I never think of the name of Gutenberg without feelings of veneration and homage. . . .

Who does not love John Gutenberg?—the man that with his leaden types has made the invisible thoughts and imaginations of the Soul visible and readable to all and by all, and secured for the worthy a double immortality? The birth of this person was an era in the world's history second to none save that of the Advent of Christ. The dawn of printing was the outburst of a new revelation, which, in its ultimate unfoldings and consequences, are alike inconceivable and immeasurable. . . .

Formerly, the Ecclesiastics monopolized the literature of the world; they were indeed in many cases the Authors and Transcribers of books; and we are indebted to them for the preservation of the old learning. Now, every Mechanic is the possessor of a Library, and may have Plato and Socrates, as well as Chaucer and the Bards, for his companions. I call this a heavenly privilege, and the greatest of all known miracles, notwithstanding it is so cheap and common.

Plato died above two thousand years ago, yet in these printed books he lives and speaks for ever. There is no death to thought; which though it may never be imprisoned in lettered language, has nevertheless an existence and propagative vitality as soon as it is uttered, and endures from generation to generation, to the very end of the world. I think we should all of us be grateful for books; they are our best friends and most faithful companions. They instruct, cheer, elevate, and ennoble us; and in whatever mood we go to them, they never frown upon us, but receive us with cordial and loving sincerity: neither do they blab, or tell tales of us when we are gone, to the next comer; but honestly, and with manly frankness, speak to our hearts in admonition or encouragement. I do not know how it is with other men, but I have so much reverence for these silent and beautiful friends that I feel in them to have an immortal and divine possession, which is more valuable to me than many estates and kingdoms. . . . I like to be alone in my chamber, and obey the muse or the spirit. We make too little of books, and have quite lost the meaning of *contemplation.* Our times are too busy; too exclusively *outward* in their tendency; and men have lost their balance in the whirlpools of commerce and the fierce tornadoes of political strife. I want to see more poise in men, more self-possession; and these can only be obtained by *communion* with books. I lay stress on the word *communion,* because although *reading* is common enough, *communion* is but little known as a modern experience. If an author be worth anything, he is worth bottoming. . . . Books should be our constant companions, for they stimulate thought, and hold a man to his purpose.—*Essays, Poems, and an Elucidation of the Bhagavat Gheeta and "The Choice of Books."*

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY. *b.* 1816.

Worthy books
Are not companions—they are solitudes;
We lose ourselves in them and all our cares.

We entreat Thee, that all men whom Thou
Hast gifted with great minds may love Thee well,
And praise Thee for their powers, and use them most
Humbly and holily, and, lever-like,
Act but in lifting up the mass of mind
About them; knowing well that they shall be
Questioned by Thee of deeds the pen hath done,
Or caused, or glozed; inspire them with delight
And power to treat of noble themes and things,
Worthily, and to leave the low and mean—
Things born of vice or day-lived fashion, in
Their naked native folly:—make them know
Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which
Men are and ought to be accountable,—
If not to Thee, to those they influence:
Grant this we pray Thee, and that all who read,
Or utter noble thoughts may make them theirs,
And thank God for them, to the betterment
Of their succeeding life;—that all who lead
The general sense and taste, too apt, perchance,
To be led, keep in mind the mighty good
They may achieve, and are in conscience, bound,
And duty, to attempt unceasingly

To compass. Grant us, All-maintaining Sire!
That all the great mechanic aids to toil
Man's skill hath formed, found, rendered,—whether used
In multiplying works of mind, or aught
To obviate the thousand wants of life,
May much avail to human welfare now
And in all ages, henceforth and for ever!
Let their effect be, Lord! to lighten labour,
And give more room to mind, and leave the poor
Some time for self-improvement. Let them not
Be forced to grind the bones out of their arms
For bread, but have some space to think and feel
Like moral and immortal creatures. God!
Have mercy on them till such time shall come.

Festus.

FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

1816—1853.

It is very surprising to find how little we retain of a book, how little we have really made our own when we come to interrogate ourselves as to what account we can give of it, however we may seem to have mastered it by understanding it. Hundreds of books read once have passed as completely from us as if we have never read them; whereas the discipline of mind got by writing down, not copying, an abstract of a book which is worth the trouble, fixes it on the mind for years, and, besides, enables one to read other books with more attention and more profit.—*Life and Letters of Fred. W. Robertson, M.A.; edited by Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.*

JOHN G. SAXE. *b.* 1816.

Ah! well I love these books of mine
  That stand so trimly on their shelves,
With here and there a broken line
  (Fat "quartos" jostling modest "twelves"
A curious company I own;
  The poorest ranking with their betters,
In brief—a thing almost unknown,
  A pure Democracy—of Letters.

If I have favourites here and there,
  And, like a monarch, pick and choose,
I never meet an angry stare
  That this I take, and that refuse;
No discords rise my soul to vex
  Among these peaceful book relations,
No envious strife of age or sex
  To mar my quiet lucubrations.

I call these friends, these quiet books,
  And well the title they may claim
Who always give me cheerful looks
  (What living friend has done the same?)
  And, for companionship, how few,
  As these, my cronies ever present,
Of all the friends I ever knew
  Have been so useful and so pleasant?

Poems by John Godfrey Saxe, LL.D., Boston.

ARTHUR HELPS. 1817—1875.

So varied, extensive, and pervading are human distresses, sorrows, short-comings, miseries, and misadventures, that a chapter of aid or consolation never comes amiss, I think. There is a pitiless, pelting rain this morning; heavily against my study windows drives the north-western gale; and altogether it is a very fit day for working at such a chapter. The indoor comforts which enable one to resent with composure, nay even to welcome, this outward conflict and hubbub, are like the plans and resources provided by philosophy and religion, to meet the various calamities driven against the soul in its passage through this stormy world. The books which reward me have been found an equal resource in both respects, both against the weather from without and from within, against physical and mental storms; and, if it might be so, I would pass on to others the comfort which a seasonable word has often brought to me. If I were to look round these shelves, what a host of well-loved names would rise up, in those who have said brave or wise words to comfort and aid their brethren in adversity. It seems as if little remained to be said; but in truth there is always waste land in the human heart to be tilled.—*Companions of My Solitude.*

What are the objects men pursue in reading? They are these: amusement, instruction, a wish to appear well in society, and a desire to pass away time. Now even the lowest of these objects is facilitated by reading with method. The keenness of pursuit thus engendered enriches the most trifling gain, takes away the sense of dulness in details, and gives an interest to what would otherwise be most repugnant. No one who has never known the eager joy of some intellectual pursuit can understand the full pleasure of reading.

In considering the present subject, the advantages to the world in general, of many persons being really versed in various subjects cannot be passed by. Were reading wisely undertaken, much more method and order would be offered to the consideration of the immediate business of the world; and there would be men who might form something of a wise public with regard to the current questions of the day.

There is another view of reading which, though it is obvious enough, is seldom taken, I imagine, or at least acted upon; and that is, that in the course of our reading we should lay up in our minds a store of goodly thoughts in well-wrought words, which should be a living treasure of knowledge always with us, and from which, at various times and amidst all the shifting of circumstances, we might be sure of drawing some comfort, guidance, and sympathy. We see this with regard to the sacred writings. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" But there is a similar comfort on a lower level, to be obtained from other sources than sacred ones. In any work that is worth carefully reading, there is generally something that is worth remembering accurately. A man whose mind is enriched with the best sayings of his own country, is a more independent man, walks the streets in a town, or the lanes in the country, with far more delight than he otherwise would have; and is taught by wise observers of man and nature, to examine for himself. Sancho Panza with his proverbs is a great deal better than he would have been without them; and I contend that a man has something in himself to meet troubles and difficulties, small or great, who has stored in his mind some of the best things which have been said about troubles and difficulties. Moreover, the loneliness of sorrow is thereby diminished.

It need not be feared that a man whose memory is rich in such resources will become a quoting pedant. Often, the sayings which are dearest to our heart, are least frequent on our lips; and those great ideas which cheer men in their direst struggles, are not things which they are likely to inflict by frequent repetition upon those they live with. There is a certain reticence with us as regards anything we deeply love.

There is a very refined use which reading is put to; namely, to counteract the particular evils and temptations of our callings, the original imperfections of our characters, the tendencies of our age, or of our own time of life. Those, for instance, who are versed in dull, crabbed work all day, of a kind which is always exercising the logical faculty and demanding minute, not to say, vexatious criticism, would, during their leisure do wisely to expatiate in writings of a large and imaginative nature. These, however, are often the persons who particularly avoid poetry and works of imagination, whereas they ought to cultivate them most. For it should be one of the frequent objects of every man who cares for the culture of his whole being, to give some exercise to those faculties which are not demanded by his daily occupations and not encouraged by his disposition.—*Friends in Council; a Series of Readings and Discourse Thereon:* "*Reading.*"

ELIZA COOK. *b.* 1818.

Uncouth surroundings fashion uncouth thinking
  And uncouth manners in our common life.
Nice eyes and ears retire with painful shrinking
  Where hardness and vulgarity are rife.
A high bred nature frets with hopeless sinking
  In the rough household with the sloven wife;
While Taste and Order in the workman's cot,
Shed Joy and Beauty on the humblest lot.

Books! ye are "Things of Beauty," fair indeed;
  Ye gild with waneless lustre homely shelves.
Ye have brought unction balm in many a need,
  Deftly and softly as Titania's elves.

. . . .

Some heavy thought has often lost its weight
  When "Robie Burns" has come to share the hour,
Crooning his rhymes till the soul grows elate
  With deep responses to his minstrel power:
When "Campbell" wraps us in sweet "Gertrude's" fate,
  Or rouses us to think we share the dower
Of Freedom's heirs, whose Red Cross crests the seas,
And, dauntless, "braves the battle and the breeze."

Poetical Works.

EARL IDDESLEIGH (STAFFORD NORTHCOTE).
1818—1887.

The desultory reader must be no mere fingerer of books without thought how they are to be turned to account. He may be wise in not allowing himself to become a bookworm, but he must take care not to become what is much worse—a book butterfly. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well, and it is possible so to regulate and pursue a seemingly desultory course of reading as to render it more truly beneficial than an apparently deeper and severer method of study. This world of ours is an old world, full of the works and records of many generations. We are in daily contact with the fragments of the past, with traces here and remains there which attract our attention, either for their intrinsic beauty or utility, or as indications of the manners and habits of mankind in former ages. Among these records assuredly there are none which are of greater interest or of higher value than the records, mere fragments though they may often be, of human history and human thought which are to be found in books. The poet tells us how we may so read the great book of nature that we may find in the trees, the stones, the running brooks, lessons which may profit as much as sermons. But while cordially accepting this teaching, we may observe that the trees and the brooks would hardly convey all those useful lessons to us if we had not a considerable knowledge of books to begin with. The lover of nature will find much revealed to him which the mere bookworm will wholly fail to notice; but, on the other hand, a well-read man who can apply the teaching of his books to the objects which he has around him will profit far more than his illiterate companion. I do not, however, desire to dwell on what may be considered little more than a truism. What I wish to point out to you is that so great is the mass of our book heritage that it is absolutely impossible for any one, and doubly impossible for us, who have other engagements in life, to make himself acquainted with the hundredth part of it. So that our choice lies for the most part between ignorance of much that we would greatly like to know and that kind of acquaintance which is to be acquired only by desultory reading.

. . . . . .

It is with a view to give you some hints as to the effects of particular methods of study upon your habits and your character that I am now inviting your attention to systems of reading. In the first place, I would offer a plea in favour of desultory reading—at least, of a certain amount of it—because it leaves a man more at liberty to pursue the particular line which suits his taste and his capacity. This is, I suppose, the ground on which Dr. Johnson commended the practice. "I would not advise," he says, "a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good." Bacon, too, in his well-known essay, tells that there are some books to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Both these high authorities therefore recognize the propriety of leaving the student some latitude in his choice of books and in his method of reading. But while this freedom is largely to be respected, it ought not to be allowed to degenerate into laxity. The tendency of a great many young men—and of old ones too, for that matter—is not only to read widely, but also to read indolently, and indolent reading is as much to be discouraged as diligent reading is to be commended.

. . . .

I may leave to yourselves the question of the amount of time you ought to give to the current literature of the day. Much of it is addressed to particular classes of persons and has an interest for them which it does not possess for others. Much, on the other hand, consists of popular renderings of subjects, sometimes admirable and useful to all, sometimes, it is to be feared, of little value or interest for any one. Habit and a little trying experience will soon teach you to discern how much of a periodical is worth the expenditure of much time. You will not be long before you acquire some skill in the arts of dipping and of skipping. Of novels I must speak in somewhat the same strain. There is probably no form of idleness so seductive or so enervating to the mind as indiscriminate novel reading. Yet some of the best and most truly instructive works in the world belong to this class. From "Don Quixote" to "Waverley," from "The Vicar of Wakefield" to "The Caxtons," from Miss Austen or Miss Edgeworth or Miss Ferrier to Charlotte Brontë or George Eliot, you will find what Horace found in those great Homeric poems—humour and wisdom, and a keen insight into the strength and the weakness of the human character. Think what a mine of wealth we possess in the novels of your own great master. What depths he sounds, what humours he makes us acquainted with! From Jeanie Deans sacrificing herself to her sisterly love in all but her uncompromising devotion to truth to the picture of the family affection and overmastering grief in the hut of poor Steenie Mucklebackit, or again from the fidelity of Meg Merrilies to that of Caleb Balderstone, you have in these and a hundred other instances examples of the great power of discerning genius to seize upon the secrets of the human heart and to reveal the inner meanings of the events which history records upon its surface, but which we do not feel that we really understand till some finer mind has clothed the dry bones with flesh and blood and presented them to us in appropriate raiment.—*Rectorial Address to the Students of Edinburgh University, Nov.* 3, 1885: "*The Pleasures, the Dangers, and the Uses of Desultory Reading.*"

CHARLES KINGSLEY. 1819—1875.

Except a living man, there is nothing more wonderful than a book!—a message to us from the dead—from human souls whom we never saw, who lived, perhaps, thousands of miles away; and yet these, on those little sheets of paper, speak to us, amuse us, vivify us, teach us, comfort us, open their hearts to us as brothers. . . . I say we ought to reverence books, to look at them as useful and mighty things. If they are good and true, whether they are about religion or politics, farming, trade, or medicine, they are the message of Christ, the maker of all things, the teacher of all truth, which He has put into the heart of some man to speak, that he may tell us what is good for our spirits, for our bodies, and for our country. Would to God that all here would make the rule never to look into an evil book! . . . A flood of books, newspapers, writings of all sorts, good and bad, is spreading over the whole land, and young and old will read them. We cannot stop that; we ought not; it is God's ordinance. It is more; it is God's grace and mercy that we have a free press in England—liberty for every man, that if he have any of God's truth to tell, he may tell it out boldly, in books or otherwise. A blessing from God! One which we should reverence, for God knows it was dearly bought. Before our forefathers could buy it for us, many an honoured man left house and home to die on the battlefield or on the scaffold, fighting and witnessing for the right of every man to whom God's word comes, to speak God's word openly to his countrymen. A blessing, and an awful one! for the same gate which lets in good, lets in evil. The law dare not silence bad books. It dare not root up the tares, lest it root up the wheat also. The men who died to buy us liberty knew that it was better to let in a thousand bad books than shut out one good one. We cannot, then, silence evil books, but we can turn away our eyes from them; we can take care that what we read, and what we let others read, should be good and wholesome.—*Village Sermons: "On Books."*

As in men, so in books, the soul is all with which our souls must deal; and the soul of the book is whatsoever beautiful, and true, and noble, we can find in it.—*Hypatia.*

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE (AMERICAN CRITIC).

b. 1819.

Books—lighthouses erected in the sea of time.

JOHN RUSKIN. *b.* 1819.

Life being very short, and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless books; and valuable books should, in a civilized country, be within the reach of every one, printed in excellent form, for a just price; but not in any vile, vulgar, or, by reason of smallness of type, physically injurious form, at a vile price. For we none of us need many books, and those which we need ought to be clearly printed, on the best paper, and strongly bound. And though we are, indeed, now, a wretched and poverty-struck nation, and hardly able to keep soul and body together, still, as no person in decent circumstances would put on his table confessedly bad wine, or bad meat without being ashamed, so he need not have on his shelves ill-printed or loosely and wretchedly-stitched books; for, though few can be rich, yet every man who honestly exerts himself may, I think, still provide, for himself and his family, good shoes, good gloves, strong harness for his cart or carriage horses, and stout leather binding for his books. And I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily—however slowly—increasing, series of books for use through life; making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece; every volume having its assigned place, like a little statue in its niche, and one of the earliest and strictest lessons to the children of the house being how to turn the pages of their own literary possessions lightly and deliberately, with no chance of tearing or dogs' ears.—*Preface to "Sesame and Lilies."*

But, granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance or necessity; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are, to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humouredly. We may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a Princess, or arresting the kind glance of a Queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet; and spend our years, and passions, and powers in pursuit of little more than these; while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation;—talk to us in the best words they can choose, and with thanks if we listen to them. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle,—and can be kept waiting round us all day long, not to grant audience, but to gain it;—kings and statesmen lingering patiently in those plainly furnished and narrow anterooms, our book-case shelves,—we make no account of that company,—perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long!

You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves, that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them, and the passion with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or who have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this,—that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces;—suppose you could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two, instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen, all day long, not to the casual talk, but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the wisest of men;—this station of audience, and honourable privy council, you despise! . . .

Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourselves that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect that you jostle with the common crowd for *entree* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested, and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

"The place you desire," and the place you *fit yourself for*, I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this:—it is open to labour and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portières of that silent Faubourg St. Germain, there is but brief question, "Do you deserve to enter?" "Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms?—no. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerable pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognise our presence." . . .

I say first we have despised literature. What do we, as a nation, care about books? How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public or private, as compared with what we spend on our horses? If a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him mad—a biblio-maniac. But you never call any one a horse-maniac, though men ruin themselves every day by their horses, and you do not hear of people ruining themselves by their books. Or, to go lower still, how much do you think the contents of the bookshelves of the United Kingdom, public and private, would fetch, as compared with the contents of its wine cellars? What position would its expenditure on literature take, as compared with its expenditure on luxurious eating? We talk of food for the mind, as of food for the body: now a good book contains such food inexhaustibly; it is a provision for life, and for the best part of us; yet how long most people would look at the best book before they would give the price of a large turbot for it! Though there have been men who have pinched their stomachs and bared their backs to buy a book, whose libraries were cheaper to them, I think, in the end than most men's dinners are. We are few of us put to such trial, and more the pity; for, indeed, a precious thing is all the more precious to us if it has been won by work or economy; and if public libraries were half as costly as public dinners, or books cost the tenth part of what bracelets do, even foolish men and women might sometimes suspect there was good in reading, as well as in munching and sparkling; whereas the very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading, it is worth buying. No book is worth anything which is not worth *much;* nor is it serviceable until it has been read, and reread, and loved, and loved again; and marked, so that you can refer to the passages you want in it, as a soldier can seize the weapon he needs in an armoury, or a housewife bring the spice she needs from her store. Bread of flour is good; but there is bread, sweet as honey, if we would eat it, in a good book; and the family must be poor indeed which once in their lives, cannot, for such multipliable barley-loaves, pay their baker's bill. We call ourselves a rich nation, and we are filthy and foolish enough to thumb each other's books out of circulating libraries! . . .

Nevertheless I hope it will not be long before royal or national libraries will be founded in every considerable city, with a royal series of books in them; the same series in every one of them, chosen books, the best in every kind, prepared for that national series in the most perfect way possible; their text printed all on leaves of equal size, broad of margin, and divided into pleasant volumes, light in the hand, beautiful, and strong, and thorough as examples of binders' work; and that these great libraries will be accessible to all clean and orderly persons at all times of the day and evening; strict law being enforced for this cleanliness and quietness.

I could shape for you other plans, for art galleries, and for natural history galleries, and for many precious, many, it seems to me, needful, things; but this book plan is the easiest and needfullest, and would prove a considerable tonic to what we call our British constitution, which has fallen dropsical of late, and has an evil thirst, and evil hunger, and wants healthier feeding.

You have got its corn laws repealed for it; try if you cannot get corn laws established for it, dealing in a better bread;—bread made of that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame, which opens doors;—doors, not of robbers', but of Kings' Treasuries.

Friends, the treasuries of true kings are the streets of their cities; and the gold they gather, which for others is as the mire of the streets, changes itself, for them and their people, into a crystalline pavement for evermore.—*Sesame and Lilies: Of Kings' Treasuries.*

I know many persons who have the purest taste in literature, and yet false taste in art, and it is a phenomenon which puzzles me not a little; but I have never known any one with false taste in books, and true taste in pictures. It is also of the greatest importance to you, not only for art's sake, but for all kinds of sake, in these days of book deluge, to keep out of the salt swamps of literature, and live on a little rocky island of your own, with a spring and a lake in it, pure and good. I cannot, of course, suggest the choice of your library to you, every several mind needs different books; but there are some books which we all need, and assuredly, if you read Homer,* Plato, Æschylus, Herodotus, Dante,† Shakspeare, and Spenser, as much as you ought, you will not require wide enlargement of shelves to right and left of them for purposes of perpetual study. Among modern books, avoid generally magazine and review literature. Sometimes it may contain a useful abridgment or a wholesome piece of criticism; but the chances are ten to one it will either waste your time or mislead you. If you want to understand any subject whatever, read the best book upon it you can hear of; not a review of the book. If you don't like the first book you try, seek for another; but do not hope ever to understand the subject without pains, by a reviewer's help. Avoid especially that class of literature which has a knowing tone; it is the most poisonous of all. Every good book, or piece of book, is full of admiration and awe; it may contain firm assertion, or stern satire, but it never sneers coldly, nor asserts haughtily, and it always leads you to reverence or love something with your whole heart. It is not always easy to distinguish the satire of the venomous race of books from the satire of the noble and pure ones; but in general you may notice that the cold-blooded Crustacean and Batrachian books will sneer at sentiment; and the warm-blooded, human books, at sin. Then, in general, the more you can restrain your serious reading to reflective or lyric poetry, history, and natural history, avoiding fiction and the drama, the healthier your mind will become. Of modern poetry keep to Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, Crabbe, Tennyson, the two Brownings, Lowell, Longfellow, and Coventry Patmore, whose "Angel in the House" is a most finished piece of writing, and the sweetest analysis we possess of quiet modern domestic feeling; while Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" is, as far as I know, the greatest poem which the century has produced in any language. Cast Coleridge at once aside, as sickly and useless; and Shelley, as shallow and verbose; Byron, until your taste is fully formed, and you are able to discern the magnificence in him from the wrong. Never read bad or common poetry, nor write any poetry yourself; there is, perhaps, rather too much than too little in the world already.

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* Chapman's, if not the original.

† Carey's or Cayley's, if not the original. I do not know which are the best translations of Plato. Herodotus and Æschylus can only be read in the original. It may seem strange that I name books like these for "beginners:" but all the greatest books contain food for all ages; and an intelligent and rightly bred youth or girl ought to enjoy much, even in Plato, by the time they are fifteen or sixteen.

Of reflective prose, read chiefly Bacon, Johnson, and Helps. Carlyle is hardly to be named as a writer for "beginners," because his teaching, though to some of us vitally necessary, may to others be hurtful. If you understand and like him, read him; if he offends you, you are not yet ready for him, and perhaps may never be so; at all events, give him up, as you would sea-bathing if you found it hurt you, till you are stronger. Of fiction, read Sir Charles Grandison, Scott's novels, Miss Edgeworth's, and, if you are a young lady, Madame de Genlis', the French Miss Edgeworth; making these, I mean, your constant companions. Of course you must, or will, read other books for amusement, once or twice; but you will find that these have an element of perpetuity in them, existing in nothing else of their kind; while their peculiar quietness and repose of manner will also be of the greatest value in teaching you to feel the same characters in art. Read little at a time, trying to feel interest in little things, and reading not so much for the sake of the story as to get acquainted with the pleasant people into whose company these writers bring you. A common book will often give you much amusement, but it is only a noble book which will give you dear friends. Remember also that it is of less importance to you in your earlier years, that the books you read should be clever than that they should be right. I do not mean oppressively or repulsively instructive; but that the thoughts they express should be just, and the feelings they excite generous. It is not necessary for you to read the wittiest or the most suggestive books; it is better, in general, to hear what is already known, and may be simply said. Much of the literature of the present day, though good to be read by persons of ripe age, has a tendency to agitate rather than confirm, and leaves its readers too frequently in a helpless or hopeless indignation, the worst possible state into which the mind of youth can be thrown. It may, indeed, become necessary for you, as you advance in life, to set your hand to things that need to be altered in the world, or apply your heart chiefly to what must be pitied in it, or condemned; but, for a young person, the safest temper is one of reverence, and the safest place one of obscurity. Certainly at present, and perhaps through all your life, your teachers are wisest when they make you content in quiet virtue, and that literature and art are best for you which point out, in common life and familar things, the objects for hopeful labour, and for humble love.—*The Elements of Drawing, in Three Letters to Beginners; Appendix II.: "Things to be Studied." Second Edition.* 1857.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. *b.* 1819.

The very gnarliest and hardest of hearts has some musical strings in it. But they are tuned differently in every one of us, so that the selfsame strain, which wakens a thrill of sympathetic melody in one, may leave another quite silent and untouched. For whatever I love, my delight amounts to an extravagance. There are verses which I cannot read without tears of exultation which to others are merely indifferent. Those simple touches scattered here and there, by all great writers, which make me feel that I, and every most despised and outcast child of God that breathes, have a common humanity with those glorious spirits, overpower me. Poetry has a key which unlocks some more inward cabinet of my nature than is accessible to any other power. I cannot explain it or account for it, or say what faculty it appeals to. The chord which vibrates strongly becomes blurred and invisible in proportion to the intensity of its impulse. Often the mere rhyme, the cadence and sound of the words, awaken this strange feeling in me. Not only do all the happy associations of my early life, that before lay scattered, take beautiful shapes, like iron dust at the approach of the magnet; but something dim and vague beyond these, moves itself in me with the uncertain sound of a far-off sea. My sympathy with the remotest eld becomes that of a bystander and an actor. . . .

The grand symphony of Wordsworth's Ode rolls through me, and I tremble, as the air does with the gathering thunders of the organ. My clay seems to have a sympathy with the mother earth whence it was taken, to have a memory of all that our orb has ever witnessed of great and noble, of sorrowful and glad. With the wise Samian, I can touch the mouldering buckler of Euphorbus and claim an interest in it deeper than that of its antiquity. I have been the bosom friend of Leander and Romeo. I seem to go behind Musæus and Shakspeare, and to get my intelligence at first hand. Sometimes in my sorrow, a line from Spenser steals in upon my memory as if by some vitality and external volition of its own, like a blast from the distant trump of a knight pricking towards the court of Faerie, and I am straightway lifted out of that sadness and shadow into the sunshine of a previous and long-agone experience. Often, too, this seemingly lawless species of association overcomes me with a sense of sadness. Seeing a waterfall or a forest for the first time, I have a feeling of something gone, a vague regret, that in some former state, I have drank up the wine of their beauty, and left to the defrauded present only the muddy lees. Yet, again, what divine over-compensation, when the same memory (shall I call it ?), or phantasy, lets fall a drop of its invisible elixir into my cup, and I behold to-day, which before showed but forlorn and beggared, clothed in the royal purple, and with the golden sceptre of a line of majestical ancestry!—*Conversations on Some of the Old Poets.* 1844.

One of the most delightful books in my father's library was White's Natural History of Selborne. For me it has rather gained in charm with years. I used to read it without knowing the secret of the pleasure I found in it, but as I grow older I begin to detect some of the simple expedients of this natural magic. Open the book where you will, it takes you out of doors. In our broiling July weather one can walk out with this genially garrulous Fellow of Oriel, and find refreshment instead of fatigue. You have no trouble in keeping abreast of him as he ambles along on his hobby-horse, now pointing to a pretty view, now stopping to watch the motions of a bird or an insect, or to bag a specimen for the Honourable Daines Barrington or Mr. Pennant. In simplicity of taste and natural refinement he reminds one of Walton; in tenderness toward what he would have called the brute creation, of Cowper. . . . Since I first read him, I have walked over some of his favourite haunts, but I still see them through his eyes rather than by any recollection of actual and personal vision. The book has also the delightfulness of absolute leisure. Mr. White seems never to have had any harder work to do than to study the habits of his feathered fellow-townsfolk, or to watch the ripening of his peaches on the wall. His volumes are the journal of Adam in Paradise,

> "Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade."

It is positive rest only to look into that garden of his. It is vastly better than to—

> See great Diocletian walk
> In the Salonian garden's noble shade,

for thither ambassadors intrude to bring with them the noises of Rome, while here the world has no entrance. No rumour of the revolt of the American Colonies

seems to have reached him. "The natural term of an hog's life" has more interest for him than that of an empire. Burgoyne may surrender and welcome; of what consequence is *that* compared with the fact that we can explain the odd tumbling of rooks in the air by their turning over "to scratch themselves with one claw?" All the couriers in Europe spurring rowel-deep make no stir in Mr. White's little Chartreuse; but the arrival of the house-martin a day earlier or later than last year is a piece of news worth sending express to all his correspondents. Another secret charm of this book is its inadvertent humour, so much the more delicious because unsuspected by the author.*
—*My Study Windows:* "*My Garden Acquaintance.*"

Then, warmly walled with books,
While my wood-fire supplies the sun's defect,
Whispering old forest-sagas in its dreams,
I take my May down from the happy shelf
Where perch the world's rare song-birds in a row,
Waiting my choice to open with full breast,
And beg an alms of spring-time, ne'er denied
In-doors by vernal Chaucer, whose fresh woods
Throb thick with merle and mavis all the year.

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* The compiler quotes the passage given above with no ordinary pleasure. When a youth, he was so smitten with the charms of "The Natural History of Selborne"—which had been lent to him by a friend—that he resolved to transcribe the entire work, before returning it to its owner. By this labour of love he became possessor of a copy which he could call his own, and thenceforth every rural walk or excursion was made more enjoyable, from his familiarity with its contents. In those early days he could truly and gratefully say of its pages—*pernoctant nobis, peregrinantur, rusticantur.*

. . . Nay, I think
Merely to bask and ripen is sometimes
The student's wiser business; the brain
That forages all climes to line its cells,
Ranging both worlds on lightest wings of wish,
Will not distil the juices it has sucked
To the sweet substance of pellucid thought,
Except for him who hath the secret learned
To mix his blood with sunshine, and to take
The winds into his pulses. *Under the Willows.*

Therefore with thee I love to read
Our brave old poets: at thy touch how stirs
Life in the withered words! how swift recede
Time's shadows! and how glows again
Through its dead mass the incandescent verse,
As when upon the anvils of the brain
It glittering lay, cyclopically wrought
By the fast-throbbing hammers of the poet's thought!

. . . . . .

What warm protection dost thou bend
Round curtained talk of friend with friend,
While the gray snow-storm, held aloof,
To softest outline rounds the roof,
Or the rude North with baffled strain
Shoulders the frost-starred window-pane!
Now the kind nymph to Bacchus borne
By Morpheus' daughter, she that seems
Gifted upon her natal morn
By him with fire, by her with dreams,
Nicotia, dearer to the Muse
Than all the grape's bewildering juice,

We worship, unforbid of thee;
And, as her incense floats and curls
In airy spires and wayward whirls,
Or poises on its tremulous stalk
A flower of frailest revery,
So winds and loiters, idly free,
The current of unguided talk,
Now laughter-rippled, and now caught
In smooth, dark pools of deeper thought.
Meanwhile thou mellowest every word,
A sweetly unobtrusive third;
For thou hast magic beyond wine,
To unlock natures each to each;
The unspoken thought thou canst divine;
Thou fill'st the pauses of the speech
With whispers that to dream-land reach,
And frozen fancy-springs unchain
In Arctic outskirts of the brain;
Sun of all inmost confidences!
To thy rays doth the heart unclose
Its formal calyx of pretences,
That close against rude day's offences,
And open its shy midnight rose.

A Winter-Evening Hymn to My Fire.

WALT WHITMAN. *b.* 1819.

Without doubt, some of the richest and most powerful and populous communities of the antique world, and some of the grandest personalities and events, have, to after and present times, left themselves entirely unbequeathed. Doubtless, greater than any that have come down to us, were among those lands, heroisms, persons, that have not come down to us at all, even by name, date, or location. Others have arrived safely, as from voyages over wide, centuries-stretching seas. The little ships, the miracles that have buoyed them, and by incredible chances safely conveyed them, (or the best of them, their meaning and essence,) over long wastes, darkness, lethargy, ignorance, &c., have been a few inscriptions—a few immortal compositions, small in size, yet compassing what measureless values of reminiscence, contemporary portraitures, manners, idioms and beliefs, with deepest inference, hint and thought, to tie and touch forever the old, new body, and the old, new soul. These! and still these! bearing the freight so dear—dearer than pride—dearer than love. All the best experience of humanity, folded, saved, freighted to us here! Some of these tiny ships we call Old and New Testament, Homer, Eschylus, Plato, Juvenal, &c. Precious minims! I think, if we were forced to choose, rather than have you, and the likes of you, and what belongs to, and has grown of you, blotted out and gone, we could better afford, appalling as that would be, to lose all actual ships, this day fastened by wharf, or floating on wave, and see them, with all their cargoes, scuttled and sent to the bottom.

Gathered by geniuses of city, race, or age, and put by them in highest of art's forms, namely, the literary form, the peculiar combinations, and the outshows of that city, age, or race, its particular modes of the universal attributes and passions, its faiths, heroes, lovers and gods, wars, traditions, struggles, crimes, emotions, joys, (or the subtle spirit of these,) having been passed on to us to illumine our own selfhood, and its experiences—what they supply, indispensable and highest, if taken away, nothing else in all the world's boundless store-houses could make up to us, or ever again return.

For us, along the great highways of time, those monuments stand—those forms of majesty and beauty. For us those beacons burn through all the nights. Unknown Egyptians, graving hieroglyphs; Hindus, with hymn and apothegm and endless epic; Hebrew prophet, with spirituality, as in flashes of lightning, conscience, like red-hot iron, plaintive songs and screams of vengeance for tyrannies and enslavement; Christ, with bent head, brooding love and peace, like a dove; Greek, creating eternal shapes of physical and esthetic proportion; Roman, lord of satire, the sword, and the codex;—of the figures, some far-off and veiled, others nearer and visible; Dante, stalking with lean form, nothing but fibre, not a grain of superfluous flesh; Angelo, and the great painters, architects, musicians; rich Shakspeare, luxuriant as the sun, artist and singer of Feudalism in its sunset, with all the gorgeous colours, owner thereof, and using them at will;—and so to such as German Kant and Hegel, where they, though near us, leaping over the ages, sit again, impassive, imperturbable, like the Egyptian gods. Of these, and the like of these, is it too much, indeed, to return to our favourite figure, and view them as orbs and systems of orbs, moving in free paths in the spaces of that other heaven, the kosmic intellect, the soul?

. . . . . .

The altitude of literature and poetry has always been Religion—and always will be. The Indian Vedas, the Naçkas of Zoroaster, The Talmud of the Jews, the Old Testament also, the Gospel of Christ and his disciples, Plato's works, the Koran of Mohammed, the Edda of Snorro, and so on toward our own day, to Swedenborg, and to the invaluable contributions of Leibnitz, Kant, and Hegel,—these, with such poems only in which, (while singing well of persons and events, of the passions of man, and the shows of the material universe,) the religious tone, the consciousness of mystery, the recognition of the future, of the unknown, of Deity, over and under all, and of the divine purpose, are never absent, but indirectly give tone to all—exhibit literature's real heights and elevations, towering up like the great mountains of the earth.

. . . . . .

The process of reading is not a half-sleep, but in the highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay—the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or framework. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. That were to make a nation of supple and athletic minds, well-trained, intuitive, used to depend on themselves, and not on a few coteries of writers. . . . This America of ours is the daughter, not by any means of the British isles exclusively, but of the Continent, and all Continents. . . . Of the great poems of Asian antiquity, the Indian epics, the Book of Job, the Ionian Iliad, the unsurpassedly simple, loving, perfect idyls of the life and death of Christ, in the New Testament, and along down, of most of the characteristic imaginative or romantic relics of the continent, as the Cid, Cervantes' Don Quixote, &c., I should say they substantially adjust themselves to us, and, far off as they are, accord curiously with our bed and board, to-day, in 1870, in Brooklyn, Washington, Canada, Ohio, Texas, California—and with our notions, both of seriousness and of fun, and our standards of heroism, manliness, and even the Democratic requirements.

. . . . . .

I cannot dismiss English, or British imaginative literature without the cheerful name of Walter Scott. In my opinion he deserves to stand next to Shakspeare. Both are, in their best and absolute quality, continental, not British—both teeming, luxuriant, true to their lands and origin, namely, feudality, yet ascending into universalism. Then, I should say, both deserve to be finally considered and construed as shining suns, whom it were ungracious to pick spots upon.—*Democratic Vistas. (Author's Edition. Camden, New Jersey.)* 1876.

MARIAN EVANS (GEORGE ELIOT).

1820—1881.

At last Maggie's eyes glanced down on the books that lay on the window-shelf, and she half forsook her reverie to turn over listlessly the leaves of the "Portrait Gallery," but she soon pushed this aside to examine the little row of books tied together with string. "Beauties of the Spectator," "Rasselas," "Economy of Human Life," "Gregory's Letters"—she knew the sort of matter that was inside all these: the "Christian Year"—that seemed to be a hymn-book, and she laid it down again; but *Thomas à Kempis?*—the name had come across her in her reading, and she felt the satisfaction, which every one knows, of getting some ideas to attach to a name that strays solitary in the memory. She took up the little, old, clumsy book with some curiosity: it had the corners turned down in many places, and some hand, now for ever quiet, had made at certain passages strong pen-and-ink marks, long since browned by time. Maggie turned from leaf to leaf, and read where the quiet hand pointed . . . "Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. . . . If thou seekest this or that, and wouldst be here or there to enjoy thy own will and pleasure, thou shalt never be quiet nor free from care: for in everything somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee. . . . Both above and below, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross: and everywhere of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting crown. . . ."

A strange thrill of awe passed through Maggie while she read, as if she had been awakened in the night by a strain of solemn music, telling of beings whose souls had been astir while hers was in stupor. She went on from one brown mark to another, where the quiet hand seemed to point, hardly conscious that she was reading—seeming rather to listen while a low voice said—". . . I have often said unto thee, and now again I say the same, Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much inward peace. . . . Then shall all vain imaginations, evil perturbations, and superfluous cares fly away; then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die."

. . . She read on and on in the old book, devouring eagerly the dialogues with the invisible Teacher, the pattern of sorrow, the source of all strength; returning to it after she had been called away, and reading till the sun went down behind the willows. . . . She knew nothing of doctrines and systems—of mysticism or quietism; but this voice out of the far-off middle ages was the direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience, and came to Maggie as an unquestioned message.

I suppose that is the reason why the small old-fashioned book, for which you need only pay sixpence at a book-stall, works miracles to this day, turning bitter waters into sweetness: while expensive sermons and treatises, newly issued, leave all things as they were before. It was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting; it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust and triumph—not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet on the stones. And so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations: the voice of a brother who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced—in the cloister, perhaps with serge gown and tonsured head, with much chanting and long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different from ours—but under the same silent far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness.—*The Mill on the Floss, Book* iv., *Chap.* 3.

GEORGE DAWSON. 1821—1876.

The great consulting room of a wise man is a library. When I am in perplexity about life, I have but to come here, and, without fee or reward, I commune with the wisest souls that God has blest the world with. If I want a discourse on immortality Plato comes to my help. If I want to know the human heart Shakspeare opens all its chambers. Whatever be my perplexity or doubt I know exactly the great man to call to me, and he comes in the kindest way, he listens to my doubts and tells me his convictions. So that a library may be regarded as the solemn chamber in which a man can take counsel with all that have been wise and great and good and glorious amongst the men that have gone before him. If we come down for a moment and look at the bare and immediate utilities of a library we find that here a man gets himself ready for his calling, arms himself for his profession, finds out the facts that are to determine his trade, prepares himself for his examination. The utilities of it are endless and priceless. It is too a place of pastime; for man has no amusement more innocent, more sweet, more gracious, more elevating, and more fortifying than he can find in a library. If he be fond of books, his fondness will discipline him as well as amuse him. . . .

I go into my library as to a hermitage—and it is one of the best hermitages the world has. What matters the scoff of the fool when you are safely amongst the great men of the past? How little of the din of this stupid world enters into a library, how hushed are the foolish voices of the world's hucksterings, barterings, and bickerings! How little the scorn of high or low, or the mad cries of party spirit can touch the man who in this best hermitage of human life draws around him the quietness of the dead and the solemn sanctities of ancient thought! Thus, whether I take it as a question of utility, of pastime or of high discipline I find the library—with but one or two exceptions—the most blessed place that man has fashioned or framed. The man who is fond of books is usually a man of lofty thought, of elevated opinions. A library is the strengthener of all that is great in life and the repeller of what is petty and mean; and half the gossip of society would perish if the books that are truly worth reading were but read.

When we look through the houses of a large part of the middle classes of this country we find there everything but what there ought most to be. There are no books in them worth talking of. If a question arises of geography they have no atlases. If the question be when a great man was born they cannot help you. They can give you a gorgeous bed, with four posts, marvellous adornments, luxurious hangings and lacquered shams all round; they can give you dinners *ad nauseam* and wine that one can, or cannot, honestly praise. But useful books are almost the last things that are to be found there; and when the mind is empty of those things that books can alone fill it with, then the seven devils of pettiness, frivolity, fashionableness, gentility, scandal, small slander and the chronicling of small beer come in and take possession of the mind. Half this nonsense would be dropped if men would only understand the elevating influences of their communing constantly with the lofty thoughts and the high resolves of men of old times.

. . . . . .

But as we cannot dwell upon all the uses and beauties of a library, let us pass on to see that this is a Corporation Library, and in that we see one of the greatest and happiest things about it, for a library, supported, as this is, by rates and administered by a Corporation, is the expression of a conviction on your part that a town like this exists for moral and intellectual purposes. It is a proclamation that a great community like this is not to be looked upon as a fortuitous concourse of human atoms, or as a miserable knot of vipers struggling in a pot, each aiming to get his head above the other in the fierce struggle of competition. It is a declaration that the Corporation of a great town like this has not done all its duty when it has put in action a set of ingenious contrivances for cleaning and lighting the streets, for breaking stones, for mending ways; and has not fulfilled its highest functions even when it has given the people of the town the best system of drainage—though that is not yet attained. Beyond all these things the Corporation of a borough like this has every function to discharge that is discharged by the master of a household—to minister to men by every office, that of the priest alone excepted. And mark this: I would rather a great book or a great picture fell into the hands of a Corporation than into the hands of an individual, for great and noble as has been the spirit of many of our collectors, when a great picture is in the hands of a nobleman however generous, or of a gentleman however large-hearted he may be, he will have his heirs, narrow-minded fools perhaps, or a successor pitifully selfish and small; and this great picture that God never intended to be painted for the delight of but one noble family, or the small collection of little people it gathers around it, may be shut up through the whim of its owner or the caprice of its master, or in self-defence against the wanton injury that some fool may have done it. But the moment you put great works into the hands of a Corporate body like this you secure permanence of guardianship in passionless keeping. A Corporation cannot get out of temper, or if it does it recovers itself quickly. A Corporation could not shut up this Library. It is open for ever. It is under the protection of the English law in all its majesty. Its endurance will be the endurance of the English nation. Therefore when a Corporation takes into its keeping a great picture or a great collection of books, that picture and those books are given to the multitude and are put into the best keeping, the keeping of those who have not the power, even if they had the will, to destroy. The time of private ownership has, I hope, nearly come to an end—not that I would put an end to it by law or by any kind of violence; but I hope we shall in the open market bid against the nobility, gentry, and private collectors, for it is a vexation when a great picture or a great collection of books is shut up in a private house. . . .

If I had my will there should not be a single cheap book in this room. If you want cheap books buy them. You can have "Waverley" for sixpence and the choice of two editions. The object of a Library like this is to buy dear books—to buy books that the lover of books cannot afford to buy; to put at the service of the poorest, books that the richest can scarce afford. . . . The object is to bring together in this room a supply of what the private man cannot compass, and what the wisest man only wants to put to occasional use. One of the great offices of a Reference Library like this is to keep at the service of everybody what everybody cannot keep at home for his own service. It is not convenient to every man to have a very large telescope; I may wish to study the skeleton of a whale but my house is not large enough to hold one; I may be curious in microscopes but I may have no money to buy one of my own. But provide an institution like this and here is the telescope, here is the microscope, and here the skeleton of the whale. Here are the great picture, the mighty book, the ponderous atlas, the great histories of the world. They are here always ready for the use of every man without his being put to the cost of purchase or the discomfort of giving them house room. Here are books that we only want to consult occasionally and which are very costly. These are the books proper for a Library like this—mighty cyclopædias, prodigious charts, books that only Governments can publish. It is almost the only place where I would avoid cheapness as a plague and run away from mean printing and petty pages with disgust. . . .

There are few things, Mr. Mayor, that I would more willingly share with you than the desire that, in days to come, when some student, in a fine rapture of gratitude, as he sits in this room, may for a moment call to mind the names of the men, who by speech and by labour, by the necessary agitation or the continuous work, took part in founding this Library. There are few places I would rather haunt after my death than this room, and there are few things I would have my children remember more than this, that this man spoke the discourse at the opening of this glorious Library, the first-fruits of a clear understanding that a great town exists to discharge towards the people of that town the duties that a great nation exists to discharge towards the people of that nation—that a town exists here by the grace of God, that a great town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped, all the highest, loftiest, and truest ends of man's intellectual and moral nature. . . . This Corporation has undertaken the highest duty that is possible to it: it has made provision for its people—for *all* its people—and it has made a provision of God's greatest and best gifts unto man.—*Inaugural Address, on the Opening of the Birmingham Free Reference Library, Oct.* 26, 1866.

CHARLES BUXTON. 1822—1871.

Readers abuse writers and say their writing is wretched stuff, stale nonsense, and so on. But what might not writers justly say of their readers? What poor, dull, indolent, feeble, careless minds do they bring to deal with thoughts whose excellence lies deep! A reader's highest achievement is to succeed in forming a true and clear conception of the author from his works. . . .

We are richer than we think. And now and then it is not a bad thing to make a catalogue raisonné of the things that are helping to make us happy. It is astonishing how long the list is. The poorest of us has property, the value of which is almost boundless; but there is not one of us who might not so till that property as to make it yield tenfold more. Our books, gardens, families, society, friends, talk, music, art, poetry, scenery, might all bring forth to us far greater wealth of enjoyment and improvement if we tried to squeeze the very utmost out of them.—*Notes of Thought.*

ROBERT LEIGHTON. 1822—1869.

Books.

I cannot think the glorious world of mind,
  Embalm'd in books, which I can only see
In patches, though I read my moments blind,
  Is to be lost to me.

I have a thought that, as we live elsewhere,
  So will these dear creations of the brain;
That what I lose unread, I'll find, and there
  Take up my joy again.

O then the bliss of blisses, to be freed
  From all the wonts by which the world is driven;
With liberty and endless time to read
  The libraries of Heaven!

Books and Thoughts.

As round these well-selected shelves one looks,
Remembering years of reading leisure flown,
It kills all hope to think how many books
He still must leave unknown.

But when to thoughts, instead of books, he comes,
Request grows less for what he cannot read,
If he reflects how many learnéd tomes
One thought may supersede.

So, let him be a toiling, unread man,
And the idea, like an added sense,
Of God informing all his life, he can
With many a book dispense.

The fine conviction, too, that Death, like Sleep,
Wakes into higher dreams—this thought will brook
Denial of the libraries, and keep
The key of many a book.

Records and other Poems.

For Many Books.

I would that we were only readers now,
And wrote no more, or in rare heats of soul
Sweated out thoughts when the o'er-burdened brow
Was powerless to control.

Then would all future books be small and few,
And, freed of dross, the soul's refinéd gold;
So should we have a chance to read the new,
Yet not forego the old.

But as it is, Lord help us, in this flood
Of daily papers, books and magazines!
We scramble blind as reptiles in the mud,
And know not what it means.

Is it the myriad spawn of vagrant tides,
  Whose growth would overwhelm both sea and
    shore,
Yet often necessary loss, provides
  Sufficient and no more?

Is it the broadcast sowing of the seeds,
  And from the stones, the thorns, and fertile soil,
Only enough to serve the world's great needs
  Rewards the sower's toil?

Is it all needed for the varied mind?
  Gives not the teeming press a book too much—
Not one, but in its dense neglect shall find
  Some needful heart to touch?

Ah, who can say that even this blade of grass
  No mission has—superfluous as it looks?
Then wherefore feel oppressed I cry, Alas
  There are too many books!

Reuben, and other Poems.

J. A. LANGFORD. *b.* 1823.

The love of books is a love which requires neither justification, apology, nor defence. It is a good thing in itself: a possession to be thankful for, to rejoice over, to be proud of, and to sing praises for. With this love in his heart no man is ever poor, ever without friends, or the means of making his life lovely, beautiful, and happy. In prosperity or adversity, in joy or sorrow, in health or sickness, in solitude or crowded towns, books are never out of place, never without the power to comfort, console, and bless. They add wealth to prosperity, and make sweeter the sweet uses of adversity; they intensify joy and take the sting from, or give a bright relief to sorrow; they are the glorifiers of health and the blessed consolers of sickness; they people solitude with the creations of thought, the children of fancy, and the offsprings of imagination, and to the busy haunts of men they lend a purpose and an aim, and tend to keep the heart unspotted in the world. It is better to possess this love than to inherit a kingdom, for it brings wealth which money can never buy, and which power is impotent to secure. It is better than gold, "yea, than much fine gold," and splendid palaces and costly raiment. No possession can surpass, or even equal, a good library to the lover of books. Here are treasured up for his daily use and delectation riches which increase by being consumed, and pleasures which never cloy. It is a realm as large as the universe, every part of which is peopled by spirits who lay before his feet their precious spoils as his lawful tribute. For him the poets sing, the philosophers discourse, the historians unfold the wonderful march of life, and the searchers of nature reveal the secrets and mysteries of creation. No matter what his rank or position may be, the lover of books is the richest and the happiest of the children of men. . . .

The only true equalisers in the world are books; the only treasure-house open to all comers is a library; the only wealth which will not decay is knowledge; the only jewel which you can carry beyond the grave is wisdom. To live in this equality, to share in these treasures, to possess this wealth, and to secure this jewel may be the happy lot of every one. All that is needed for the acquisition of these inestimable treasures is, the love of books. . . .

As friends and companions, as teachers and consolers, as recreators and amusers books are always with us, and always ready to respond to our wants. We can take them with us in our wanderings, or gather them around us at our firesides. In the lonely wilderness, and the crowded city, their spirit will be with us, giving a meaning to the seemingly confused movements of humanity, and peopling the desert with their own bright creations. Without the love of books the richest man is poor; but endowed with this treasure of treasures, the poorest man is rich. He has wealth which no power can diminish; riches which are always increasing; possessions which the more he scatters the more they accumulate; friends who never desert him, and pleasures which never cloy.—*The Praise of Books.*

ROBERT COLLYER. *b.* 1823.

Those who must be their own helpers need not be one whit discouraged. The history of the world is full of bright examples of the value of self-training, as shown by the subsequent success won as readers, and writers, and workers in every department of life by those who apparently lacked both books to read and time to read them, or even the candle wherewith to light the printed page. "Do you want to know how I manage to talk to you in this simple Saxon? I will tell you. I read Bunyan, Crusoe, and Goldsmith when I was a boy, morning, noon, and night. All the rest was task work, these were my delight, with the stories in the Bible, and with Shakspeare when at last the mighty master came within our doors. The rest were as senna to me. These were like a well of pure water, and this is the first step I seem to have taken of my own free will toward the pulpit. . . . I took to these as I took to milk, and, without the least idea what I was doing, got the taste for simple words into the very fibre of my nature. There was day-school for me until I was eight years old, and then I had to turn in and work thirteen hours a day. . . . From the days when we used to spell out Crusoe and old Bunyan there had grown up in me a devouring hunger to read books. It made small matter what they were, so they were books. Half a volume of an old encyclopædia came along—the first I had ever seen. How many times I went through that I cannot even guess. I remember that I read some old reports of the Missionary Society with the greatest delight. There were chapters in them about China and Labrador. Yet I think it is in reading as it is in eating, when the first hunger is over you begin to be a little critical, and will by no means take to garbage if you are of a wholesome nature. And I remember this because it touches this beautiful valley of the Hudson. I could not go home for the Christmas of 1839, and was feeling very sad about it all, for I was only a boy; and sitting by the fire, an old farmer came in and said: 'I notice thou's fond o' reading, so I brought thee summat to read.' It was Irving's 'Sketch Book.' I had never heard of the work. I went at it, and was 'as them that dream.' No such delight had touched me since the old days of Crusoe. I saw the Hudson and the Catskills, took poor Rip at once into my heart, as everybody has, pitied Ichabod while I laughed at him, thought the old Dutch feast a most admirable thing, and long before I was through, all regret at my lost Christmas had gone down the wind, and I had found out there are books and books. That vast hunger to read never left me. If there was no candle, I poked my head down to the fire; read while I was eating, blowing the bellows, or walking from one place to another. I could read and walk four miles an hour. The world centred in books. There was no thought in my mind of any good to come out of it; the good lay in the reading. I had no more idea of being a minister than you elder men who were boys then, in this town, had that I should be here to-night to tell this story. Now, give a boy a passion like this for anything, books or business, painting or farming, mechanism or music, and you give him thereby a lever to lift his world, and a patent of nobility, if the thing he does is noble. There were two or three of my mind about books. We became companions, and gave the roughs a wide berth. The books did their work too, about that drink, and fought the devil with a finer fire. I remember while I was yet a lad reading Macaulay's great essay on Bacon, and I could grasp its wonderful beauty. There has been no time when I have not felt sad that there should have been no chance for me at a good education and training. I miss it every day, but such chances as were left lay in that everlasting hunger to still be reading. I was tough as leather, and could do the double stint, and so it was that, all unknown to myself, I was as one that soweth good seed in his field."

And these are among the sure criterions to me of a *bad* book. If, when I read a book about God, I find that it has put Him farther from me; or about man, that it has put me farther from him; or about this universe, that it has shaken down upon it a new look of desolation, turning a green field into a wild moor; or about life, that it has made it seem a little less worth living on all accounts than it was; or about moral principles, that they are not quite so clear and strong as they were when this author began to talk; then I know that, on any of these five cardinal things in the life of a man—his relation to God, to his fellows, to the world about him, and the world within him, and the great principles on which all things stable centre—*that*, for me, is a bad book. It may chime in with some lurking appetite in my own nature, and so seem to be as sweet as honey to my taste, but it comes to bitter, bad results. It may be food for another. I can say nothing to that. He may be a pine, while I am a palm. I only know this, that in these great first things, if the book I read shall touch them at all, it shall touch them to my profit or else I will not read it. Right and wrong shall grow more clear; life in and about me more divine; I shall come nearer to my fellows and God nearer to me, or the thing is a poison. Faust, or Calvin, or Carlyle, if any one of these cardinal things is the grain and grist of the book, and that is what it comes to when I read it, I am being drugged and poisoned, and the sooner I know it the better. I want bread, and meat, and milk, not brandy, or opium, or hasheesh.

. . . . .

If the book be of religion, and brings God nearer to my heart and life; if it be of humanity, and brings me nearer to the heart and life of man; if it be of philosophy, and makes this universe glow to me with a new grace; or of metaphysics, and brings me more truly to myself; if it be poem, or story, adventure, or history, or biography, and I feel that it makes me more of a man, more dutiful, and sincere, and trusty, then no matter who wrote it or what men say about it, the judgment is set in my own soul.—*Addresses, Sermons, &c., by the Rev. Robert Collyer, Chicago, U. S.*

JAMES HAIN FRISWELL. 1827—1878.

When a man loves books he has in him that which will console him under many sorrows and strengthen him in various trials. Such a love will keep him at home, and make his time pass pleasantly. Even when visited by bodily or mental affliction, he can resort to this book-love and be cured. . . . And when a man is at home and happy with a book, sitting by his fireside, he must be a churl if he does not communicate that happiness. Let him read now and then to his wife and children. Those thoughts will grow and take root in the hearts of the listeners. Good scattered about is indeed the seed of the sower. A man who feels sympathy with what is good and noble is, at the time he feels that sympathy, good and noble himself.

To a poor man book-love is not only a consoling preservative, but often a source of happiness, power, and wealth. It lifts him from the mechanical drudgery of the day. It takes him away from bad companions, and gives him the close companionship of a good and fine-thinking man; for, while he is reading Bacon or Shakspeare, he is talking with Bacon or Shakspeare. While his body is resting, his mind is working and growing. . . .

It is true that this priesthood is of no Church, and is not in orders; but it is not the less important on that account. What a power does a writer hold who addresses every week, or every day, or month, a larger congregation than a hundred churches could hold! There are many writers of the present day who address as many, nay, more than the number indicated, if we put it at its largest.

This importance of the priesthood of letters is carried yet further if we remember that the words of a preacher fall on our ears and are often forgotten, while those of the writer remain. Ink-stains are difficult to get out: there is nothing so imperishable as a book.—*The Gentle Life; Second Series:* "*On Book Love.*"

C. Kegan Paul. *b.* 1828.

To go into a library is like the wandering into some great cathedral church and looking at the monuments on the walls. Every one there was in his or her day the pattern of all the virtues, the best father, the tenderest wife, the most devoted child. Never were such soldiers and sailors as those whose crossed swords or gallant ships are graven in marble above their tombs; every dead sovereign was virtuous as Marcus Aurelius, every bishop as blameless as Berkeley. The inscriptions are all of the kind which George IV. put on the statue of George III. at the end of the "Long Walk" at Windsor. Having embittered his father's life while that father had mind enough to know the baseness of his son, he called him "pater optimus," best of fathers! This same George, it may be said in a parenthesis, gave to the library of Eton School, not such a tomb of dead books as is the library of Eton College, the dead Delphin Classics, which have been well described as "the useless present of a royal rake."

Yet those names so forgotten which meet us in the Church were not without their influence. If there be one statement more than another to be disputed among those made by Shakspeare's *Mark Antony*, it is—

"The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones."

It has a truth, but a less truth than that the good more often lives, and passes into other lives to be renewed and carried forward with fresh vigour in the coming age. Were it not so the human race would steadily deteriorate, weltering down into a black and brutal corruption, ever quickening, if at all, into lower forms. As it is we know that the race, with all its imperfections, "moves upward, working out the beast, and lets the ape and tiger die." The great men stand like stars at distant intervals, individuals grander, perhaps, than ever will be again, each in his own way; but still the average level of every succeeding age is higher than that which went before it. We may never again have an Homer, Aristotle, Archimedes, St. Paul, Cæsar, or Charlemagne; but in all things those great ones who forecast philosophy, or science, or mediæval civilization bear sway over us still,—"the living are under the dominion of the dead." Those lesser forgotten ones of whom we have spoken have carried on the torch of life in his or her own home circle, were influential even if not widely known, and have helped to make humanity what she is and will be,—our lady, our mistress, our mother, and our queen.

. . . .

As perhaps no human life was ever wholly worthless, and the worst use to which you can put a man, as has been said, is to hang him, so no book is wholly worthless, and none should ever be destroyed. We have probably all had the same experience, that we have never parted with a book, however little we fancied it would be wanted again, without regretting it soon afterwards. There is a spark of good remaining in the most unvirtuous person or book.—"*The Production and Life of Books.*" *Fortnightly Review, April,* 1883.

ALEXANDER SMITH. 1830—1867.

In my garden I spend my days; in my library I spend my nights. My interests are divided between my geraniums and my books. With the flower I am in the present; with the book I am in the past. I go into my library, and all history unrolls before me. I breathe the morning air of the world while the scent of Eden's roses yet lingered in it, while it vibrated only to the world's first brood of nightingales, and to the laugh of Eve. I see the pyramids building; I hear the shoutings of the armies of Alexander; I feel the ground shake beneath the march of Cambyses. I sit as in a theatre,—the stage is time, the play is the play of the world. What a spectacle it is! What kingly pomp, what processions file past, what cities burn to heaven, what crowds of captives are dragged at the chariot-wheels of conquerors! I hiss or cry "Bravo" when the great actors come on shaking the stage. I am a Roman emperor when I look at a Roman coin. I lift Homer, and I shout with Achilles in the trenches. The silence of the unpeopled Syrian plains, the out-comings and in-goings of the patriarchs, Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac in the fields at even-tide, Rebekah at the well, Jacob's guile, Esau's face reddened by desert sun-heat, Joseph's splendid funeral procession—all these things I find within the boards of my Old Testament. What a silence in those old books as of a half-peopled world—what bleating of flocks—what green pastoral rest—what indubitable human existence! Across brawling centuries of blood and war, I hear the bleating of Abraham's flocks, the tinkling of the bells of Rebekah's camels. O men and women, so far separated yet so near, so strange yet so well-known, by what miraculous power do I know ye all! Books are the true Elysian fields where the spirits of the dead converse, and into these fields a mortal may venture unappalled. What king's court can boast such company? What school of philosophy such wisdom? The wit of the ancient world is glancing and flashing there. There is Pan's pipe, there are the songs of Apollo. Seated in my library at night, and looking on the silent faces of my books, I am occasionally visited by a strange sense of the supernatural.

They are not collections of printed pages, they are ghosts. I take one down and it speaks with me in a tongue not now heard on earth, and of men and things of which it alone possesses knowledge. I call myself a solitary, but sometimes I think I misapply the term. No man sees more company than I do. I travel with mightier cohorts around me than ever did Timour or Genghis Khan on their fiery marches. I am a sovereign in my library, but it is the dead, not the living that attend my levees.—*Dreamthorp: a Book of Essays Written in the Country, by Alexander Smith, Author of "A Life's Drama," &c.*

To define the charm of style is as difficult as to define the charm of beauty or of fine manners. It is not one thing, it is the result of a hundred things. Everything a man has is concerned in it. It is the amalgam and issue of all his faculties, and it bears the same relation to these that light bears to the sun, or the perfume to the flower. And apart from its value as an embalmer and preserver of thought, it has this other value, that it is a secret window through which we can look in on the writer. A man may work with ideas which he has not originated, which do not in any special way belong to himself; but his style—in which is included his way of approaching a subject, and his method of treating it—is always personal and characteristic. We decipher a man by his style, find out secrets about him, as if we over-heard his soliloquies, and had the run of his diaries, just as in conversation, and in the ordinary business of life, we draw our impressions, not so much from what a man says, as from the manner and the tone of voice in which the thing is said. The cunning reader draws conclusions from emphasis, takes notes of the half-perceptible sneer, makes humour stand and deliver its secret, and estimates what bitterness it has taken to congeal into sharpness the icy spear of wit. After this fashion, in every book the writer's biography may more or less clearly be read. For a man needs not to speak directly about himself to be personally communicative. And, in truth, it is in the amount of this kind of personal revelation that the final value of a book resides. We read books, not so much for what they say as for what they suggest.

. . . . . .

Take up an essay of Montaigne's; you are startled by no remarkable breadth or weight of idea, but you are constantly encountering sentences through which you can look in on the author as through a stereoscopic lens. You take up an essay of Charles Lamb's, and in the quaint setting of his thoughts—like a piquant face in a Quaker bonnet—you are continually renewing and improving your acquaintance with the shiest, most delicate, and, in some respects, the noblest and purest of modern spirits. People never weary of reading Montaigne and Lamb, for while the thoughts they express have sufficient merit *as* thoughts, they are at the same time biographies in brief. They may have written finely or foolishly, seriously or with levity, but they have always written with a certain personal flavour. . . . Every sentence of the great writer is like an autograph. There is no chance of mistaking Milton's large utterance, or Jeremy Taylor's images, or Sir Thomas Browne's quaintness, or Charles Lamb's cunning turns of sentence. These are as distinct and individual as the features of their faces or their signatures. If Milton had endorsed a bill with half-a-dozen blank verse lines, it would be as good as his name, and would be accepted as good evidence in court. If Lamb had never gathered up his essays into those charming volumes, he could be tracked easily by the critical eye through all the magazines of his time. The identity of these men can never be mistaken. Every printed page of theirs is like a coat of arms, every trivial note on ordinary business like the impression of a signet ring.—*Last Leaves: Sketches and Criticisms. Edited, with a Memoir, by P. P. Alexander, M.A.*

W. H. RANDS (MATTHEW BROWNE).
d. 1882.

I am not at all afraid of urging overmuch the propriety of frequent, very frequent, reading of the same book. The book remains the same, but the reader changes, and the value of reading lies in the collision of minds. It may be taken for granted that *no* conceivable amount of reading could ever put me into the position with respect to his book—I mean as to intelligence only—in which the author strove to place me. I may read him a hundred times, and not catch the precise right point of view; and may read him a hundred and one times, and approach it the hundred and first. The driest and hardest book that ever was contains an interest over and above what can be picked out of it, and laid, so to speak, on the table. It is interesting as my friend is interesting; it is a problem which invites me to closer knowledge, and *that* usually means better liking. He must be a poor friend that we only care to see once or twice, and then forget.

It never seems to occur to some people, who deliver upon the books they read very unhesitating judgments, that they may be wanting, either by congenital defect, or defect of experience, or defect of reproductive memory, in the qualifications which are necessary for judging fairly of any particular book. Yet the first question a practised and conscientious reader asks himself is, whether he has any natural or accidental disability for the task of criticism in any given case. It may surprise many persons to hear of the possibility of such a thing; but perhaps it may be made clear by examples.

As to congenital defect. We all admit that some individuals are born with better "ears" for music, and better "eyes" for colour, and more "taste" for drawing than others, and we willingly defer, other things being equal, to the decisions upon the points in question of those who are by nature the best gifted. It is quite a common thing to meet people who, in spite of culture, continue unmusical all their lives long, or unable to catch perspective, or draw a wheel round or a chimney straight, or discriminate fine shades of colour at all. What is the value of the opinions of such persons upon questions of the fine arts? Scarcely anything, of course. Now a book is in nowise distinguished, for our present purpose, from a picture or a sonata. It is sure, if it be a good book, to appeal, in some of its parts, to special aptitudes of sensibility on the part of its readers; but if the reader lacks the aptitudes, where is the author? And cases in point are not so rare as might be supposed. There are thousands of people who are wanting in sensibility to beauty in general; in the feeling of personal attachment; in the feelings of the hearth; the feelings of the forum; the feelings of the altar. It is not at all uncommon to come across characters in which the ordinary natural susceptibility to devotional ideas, nay to fervid ideas in general, seems wholly left out. It is as if they had come into the world with a sense short. Again, you may meet people who have no idea of humour. Allow any latitude you please for *taste* in this matter—and, of course, taste differs—it still remains true that a total absence of the sense of fun is occasionally seen in society. This is, indeed, quite a commonplace. Now, we must remember, that in speaking of *qualities* we, after all, draw arbitrary boundary lines. There are many deficiencies as many as there are human beings, which cannot be labelled—compound deficiencies, so to speak, which affect the total appreciativeness of our minds to a degree which we ourselves cannot measure, though a healthy self-consciousness may keep us on our guard: and, of course, our estimates of literature, as of other forms of art, must be affected by such shortcomings in our natural make.

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Poor indeed must our experience be as readers of books if we have never found a page, which once we thought empty, *now* full of life and light and meaning. True, it is the business of the artist to *make* us feel with him and see with him; some fault may be his,—

and yet not all the fault. At least, he may claim that we should bring to him a tolerably patient and receptive mind, not a repelling, refusive mind; in a word, that we should treat him with decency, if we profess to attend to him at all.

Akin to defect of experience is defect of retrospective or reproductive memory—the power of feeling one's past over again. It is very common for a man to take up a book which he once admired with passion, and to find scarcely anything in it. What, then, is the natural thought, the one that he is most likely to make? That his judgment is more mature, I suppose. Well, it may be, and it ought to be; but certainly the author of the work may claim that his reader should ask himself another question, namely, Have I lost anything in general or specific sensibility since I first read this book? I have myself had to ask this question, and to answer it *against* myself. Lapse of time *must* alter us; and we are, perhaps, too apt to fancy ourselves wiser when we are only something more hard, and something more dull. It has happened to me, indeed, to agree with a writer upon first reading, to disagree with him upon second reading, after an interval of a year or two; and then again, upon third reading, after another interval, to have to come back to my first opinion.—*Views and Opinions: "On Forming Opinions of Books."*

FREDERIC HARRISON. *b.* 1831.

Far be it from me to gainsay the inestimable value of good books, or to discourage any man from reading the best; but I often think that we forget that other side to this glorious view of literature:—the misuse of books, the debilitating waste of life in aimless promiscuous vapid reading, or even, it may be, in the poisonous inhalation of mere literary garbage and bad men's worst thoughts.

For what can a book be more than the man who wrote it? The brightest genius, perhaps, never puts the best of his own soul into his printed page; and some of the most famous men have certainly put the worst of theirs. Yet are all men desirable companions, much less teachers, fit to be listened to, able to give us advice, even of those who get reputation and command a hearing? Or, to put out of the question that writing which is positively bad, are we not, amidst the multiplicity of books and of writers, in continual danger of being drawn off by what is stimulating rather than solid, by curiosity after something accidentally notorious, by what has no intelligible thing to recommend it, except that it is new? Now, to stuff our minds with what is simply trivial, simply curious, or that which at best has but a low nutritive power, this is to close our minds to what is solid and enlarging, and spiritually sustaining. Whether our neglect of the great books comes from our not reading at all, or from an incorrigible habit of reading the little books, it ends in just the same thing. And that thing is ignorance of all the greater literature of the world. To neglect all the abiding parts of knowledge for the sake of the evanescent parts is really to know nothing worth knowing. It is in the end the same thing, whether we do not use our minds for serious study at all, or whether we exhaust them by an impotent voracity for idle and desultory "information," as it is called—a thing as fruitful as whistling. Of the two plans I prefer the former. At least, in that case, the mind is healthy and open. It is not gorged and enfeebled by excess in that which cannot nourish, much less enlarge and beautify our nature.

But there is much more than this. Even to those who resolutely avoid the idleness of reading what is trivial, a difficulty is presented, a difficulty every day increasing by virtue even of our abundance of books. What are the subjects, what are the class of books we are to read, in what order, with what connection, to what ultimate use or object? Even those who are resolved to read the better books are embarrassed by a field of choice practically boundless. The longest life, the greatest industry, the most powerful memory, would not suffice to make us profit from a hundredth part of the world of books before us. . . .

A man of power, who has got more from books than most of his contemporaries, has lately said: "Form a habit of reading, do not mind what you read, the reading of better books will come when you have a habit of reading the inferior." I cannot agree with him. I think a habit of reading idly debilitates and corrupts the mind for all wholesome reading; I think the habit of reading wisely is one of the most difficult habits to acquire, needing strong resolution and infinite pains; and I hold the habit of reading for mere reading's sake, instead of for the sake of the stuff we gain from reading, to be one of the worst and commonest and most unwholesome habits we have. Why do we still suffer the traditional hypocrisy about the dignity of literature, literature I mean, in the gross, which includes about equal parts of what is useful and what is useless? Why are books as books, writers as writers, readers as readers, meritorious and honourable, apart from any good in them, or anything that we can get from them? Why do we pride ourselves on our powers of absorbing print, as our grandfathers did on their gifts in imbibing port, when we know that there is a mode of absorbing print which makes it impossible we can ever learn anything good out of books?

Our stately Milton said in a passage which is one of the watchwords of the English race, "as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book." But has he not also said that he would "have a vigilant eye how Bookes demeane themselves, as well as men; and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors"? . . . Yes! they do kill the good book who deliver up their few and precious hours of reading to the trivial book; they make it dead for them; they do what lies in them to destroy "the precious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life;" they "spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Bookes." For in the wilderness of books most men, certainly all busy men, *must* strictly choose. If they saturate their minds with the idler books, the "good book," which Milton calls "an immortality rather than a life," is dead to them: it is a book sealed up and buried.

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Men who are most observant as to the friends they make, or the conversation they join in, are carelessness itself as to the books to whom they entrust themselves, and the printed language with which they saturate their minds. Yet can any friendship or society be more important to us than that of the books which form so large a part of our minds and even of our characters? Do we in real life take any pleasant fellow to our homes and chat with some agreeable rascal by our firesides, we who will take up any pleasant fellow's printed memoirs, we who delight in the agreeable rascal when he is cut up into pages and bound in calf? . . .

The vast proportion of books are books that we shall never be able to read. A serious percentage of books are not worth reading at all. The really vital books for us we also know to be a very trifling portion of the whole. And yet we act as if every book were as good as any other, as if it were merely a question of order which we take up first, as if any book were good enough for us, and as if all were alike honourable, precious, and satisfying. Alas! books cannot be more than the men who write them; and as a large proportion of the human race now write books, with motives and objects as various as human activity, books, as books, are entitled *à priori*, until their value is proved, to the same attention and respect as houses, steam-engines, pictures, fiddles, bonnets, and other thoughtful or ornamental products of human industry. In the shelves of those libraries which are our pride, libraries public or private, circulating or very stationary, are to be found those great books of the world *rari nantes in gurgite vasto,* those books which are truly "the precious life-blood of a master spirit." But the very familiarity which their mighty fame has bred in us makes us indifferent; we grow weary of what every one is supposed to have read; and we take down something which looks a little eccentric, or some author on the mere ground that we never heard of him before.

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And thus there never was a time, at least during the last two hundred years, when the difficulties in the way of making an efficient use of books were greater than they are to-day, when the obstacles were more real between readers and the right books to read, when it was practically so troublesome to find out that which it is of vital importance to know; and that not by the dearth, but by the plethora of printed matter. For it comes to nearly the same thing whether we are actually debarred by physical impossibility from getting the right book into our hand, or whether we are choked off from the right book by the obtrusive crowd of the wrong books; so that it needs a strong character and a resolute system of reading to keep the head cool in the storm of literature around us. We read nowadays in the market-place—I would rather say in some large steam factory of letter-press, where damp sheets of new print whirl round us perpetually—if it be not rather some noisy book-fair where literary showmen tempt us with performing dolls, and the gongs of rival booths are stunning our ears from morn till night.

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But the question which weighs upon me with such really crushing urgency is this:—what are the books that in our little remnant of reading time it is most vital for us to know? For the true use of books is of such sacred value to us that to be simply entertained is to cease to be taught, elevated, inspired by books; merely to gather information of a chance kind is to close the mind to knowledge of the urgent kind. Every book that we take up without a purpose is an opportunity lost of taking up a book with a purpose—every bit of stray information which we cram into our heads without any sense of its importance, is for the most part a bit of the most useful information driven out of our heads and choked off from our minds. It is so certain that information, *i.e.* the knowledge, the stored thoughts and observations of mankind, is now grown to proportions so utterly incalculable and prodigious, that even the learned whose lives are given to study can but pick up some crumbs that fall from the table of truth. They delve and tend but a plot in that vast and teeming kingdom, whilst those, whom active life leaves with but a few cramped hours of study, can hardly come to know the very vastness of the field before them, or how infinitesimally small is the corner they can traverse at the best. We know all is not of equal value. We know that books differ in value as much as diamonds differ from the sand on the seashore, as much as our living friend differs from a dead rat. We know that much in the myriad-peopled world of books—very much in all kinds—is trivial, enervating, inane, even noxious. And thus, where we have infinite opportunities of wasting our efforts to no end, of fatiguing our minds without enriching them, of clogging the spirit without satisfying it, there, I cannot but think, the very infinity of opportunities is robbing us of the actual power of using them. And thus I come often, in my less hopeful moods, to watch the remorseless cataract of daily literature which thunders over the remnants of the past, as if it were a fresh impediment to the men of our day in the way of systematic knowledge and consistent powers of thought: as if it were destined one day to overwhelm the great inheritance of mankind in prose and verse.

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And so, I say it most confidently, the first intellectual task of our age is rightly to order and make serviceable the vast realm of printed material which four centuries have swept across our path. To organize our knowledge, to systematise our reading, to save, out of the relentless cataract of ink, the immortal thoughts of the greatest—this is a necessity, unless the productive ingenuity of man is to lead us at last to a measureless and pathless chaos. To know anything that turns up is, in the infinity of knowledge, to know nothing. To read the first book we come across, in the wilderness of books, is to learn nothing. To turn over the pages of ten thousand volumes is to be practically indifferent to all that is good.

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I stand by the men, and by all the men, who have moved mankind to the depths of their souls, who have taught generations, and formed our life. If I say of Scott, that to have drunk in the whole of his glorious spirit is a liberal education in itself, I am asking for no exclusive devotion to Scott, to any poet, or any school of poets, or any age, or any country, to any style or any order of poet, one more than another. They are as various, fortunately, and as many-sided as human nature itself. If I delight in Scott, I love Fielding, and Richardson, and Sterne, and Goldsmith, and

Defoe. Yes, and I will add Cooper and Marryat, Miss Edgeworth and Miss Austen—to confine myself to those who are already classics, to our own country, and to one form of art alone, and not to venture on the ground of contemporary romance in general. What I have said of Homer, I would say in a degree but somewhat lower, of those great ancients who are the most accessible to us in English—Æschylus, Aristophanes, Virgil, and Horace. What I have said of Shakspeare, I would say of Calderon, of Molière, of Corneille, of Racine, of Voltaire, of Alfieri, of Goethe, of those dramatists, in many forms, and with genius the most diverse, who have so steadily set themselves to idealise the great types of public life and of the phases of human history. Let us all beware lest worship of the idiosyncrasy of our peerless Shakspeare blind us to the value of the great masters who in a different world and with different aims have presented the development of civilisation in a series of dramas, where the unity of a few great types of man and of society is made paramount to subtlety of character or brilliancy of language. What I have said of Milton, I would say of Dante, of Ariosto, of Petrarch, and of Tasso; nor less would I say it of Boccaccio and Chaucer, of Camoens and Spenser, of Rabelais and of Cervantes, of Gil Blas and the Vicar of Wakefield, of Byron and of Shelley, of Goethe and of Schiller. Nor let us forget those wonderful idealisations of awakening thought and primitive societies, the pictures of other races and types of life removed from our own: all those primæval legends, ballads, songs, and tales, those proverbs, apologues, and maxims, which have come down to us from distant ages of man's history—the old idylls and myths of the Hebrew race; the tales of Greece, of the Middle Ages, of the East; the fables of the old and the new world; the songs of the Nibelungs; the romances of early feudalism; the Morte d'Arthur; the Arabian Nights; the Ballads of the early nations of Europe.

I protest that I am devoted to no school in particular: I condemn no school, I reject none. I am for the school of all the great men; and I am against the school of the smaller men. I care for Wordsworth as well as for Byron, for Burns as well as Shelley, for Boccaccio as well as for Milton, for Bunyan as well as Rabelais, for Cervantes as much as for Dante, for Corneille as well as for Shakspeare, for Goldsmith as well as Goethe. I stand by the sentence of the world; and I hold that in a matter so human and so broad as the highest poetry the judgment of the nations of Europe is pretty well settled, at any rate after a century or two of continuous reading and discussing. Let those who will assure us that no one can pretend to culture unless he swear by Fra Angelico and Sandro Botticelli, by Arnolpho the son of Lapo, or the Lombardic bricklayers, by Martini and Galuppi (all, by the way, admirable men of the second rank); and so, in literature and poetry, there are some who will hear of nothing but Webster or Marlowe; Blake, Herrick, or Keats; William Langland or the Earl of Surrey; Heine or Omar Kayam. All of these are men of genius, and each with a special and inimitable gift of his own. But the busy world, which does not hunt poets as collectors hunt for curios, may fairly reserve these lesser lights for the time when they know the greatest well.

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Now poetry and the highest kind of romance are exactly that order of literature, which not only will bear to be read many times, but that of which the true value can only be gained by frequent, and indeed habitual, reading. A man can hardly be said to know the 12th Mass or the 9th Symphony, by virtue of having once heard them played ten years ago; he can hardly be said to take air and exercise because he took a country-walk once last autumn. And so, he can hardly be said to know Scott, or Shakspeare, Molière, or Cervantes, when he once read them since the close of his school days, or amidst the daily grind of his professional life. The immortal and universal poets of our race are to be read and re-read till their music and their spirit are a part of our nature; they are to be thought over and digested till we live in the world they created for us; they are to be read devoutly, as devout men read their Bible and fortify their hearts with psalms. For as the old Hebrew singer heard the heavens declare the glory of their maker, and the firmament showing his handiwork, so in the long roll of poetry we see transfigured the strength and beauty of humanity, the joys and sorrows, the dignity and struggles, the long life-history of our common kind.

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The great religious poets, the imaginative teachers of the heart, are never easy reading. But the reading of them is a religious habit, rather than an intellectual effort. I pretend not to-night to be dealing with a matter so deep and high as religion, or indeed with education in the fuller sense. I will say nothing of that side of reading which is really hard study, an effort of duty, matter of meditation and reverential thought. I need speak not to-night of such reading as that of the Bible; the moral reflections of Socrates, of Aristotle, of Confucius; the Confessions of St. Augustine and the City of God; the discourses of St. Bernard, of Bossuet, of Bishop Butler, of Jeremy Taylor; the vast philosophical visions that were opened to the eyes of Bacon and Descartes; the thoughts of Pascal and Vauvenargues, of Diderot and Hume, of Condorcet and de Maistre; the problem of man's nature as it is told in the *Excursion*, or in *Faust*, in *Cain*, or in the *Pilgrim's Progress;* the unsearchable outpouring of the heart in the great mystics, of many ages and many races; be the mysticism that of David or of John; of Mahomet or of Bouddha; of Fénelon or of Shelley.

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I vow that, when I see men, forgetful of the perennial poetry of the world, muck-raking in a litter of fugitive refuse, I think of that wonderful scene in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where the Interpreter shows the wayfarers the old man raking in the straw and dust, whilst he will not see the Angel who offers him a crown of gold and precious stones.

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Was ever truer word said than that about Fielding as "the prose Homer of human nature?" And yet how often do we forget in *Tom Jones* the beauty of unselfishness, the well-spring of goodness, the tenderness, the manly healthiness and heartiness underlying its frolic and its satire, because we are absorbed, it may be, in laughing at its humour, or are simply irritated by its grossness! Nay, *Robinson Crusoe* contains (not for boys but for men) more religion, more philosophy, more psychology, more political economy, more anthropology, than are found in many elaborate treatises on these special subjects. . . . For once that we take down our Milton, and read a book of that "voice," as Wordsworth says, "whose sound is like the sea," we take up fifty times a magazine with something about Milton, or about Milton's grandmother, or a book stuffed with curious facts about the houses in which he lived, and the juvenile ailments of his first wife.

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Some firm foot-hold in the vast and increasing torrent of literature it is certainly urgent to find, unless all that is great in literature is to be borne away in the flood of books. With this, we may avoid an interminable wandering over a pathless waste of waters. Without it, we may read everything and know nothing; we may be curious about anything that chances, and indifferent to everything that profits. Having such a catalogue before our eyes, with its perpetual warning—*non multa sed multum*—we shall see how with our insatiable consumption of print we wander, like unclassed spirits, round the outskirts only of those Elysian fields where the great dead dwell and hold high converse. We need to be reminded every day, how many are the books of inimitable glory, which, with all our eagerness after reading, we have never taken in our hands. It will astonish most of us to find how much of our very industry is given to the books which leave no mark, how often we rake in the litter of the printing-press, whilst a crown of gold and rubies is offered us in vain.—*On the Choice of Books*

EDWARD BUTLER. *b.* 1828.

It is possible—nay, it is necessary—that a man should keep up a general acquaintance with the results of scientific research. The outlines of geology, the salient facts of astronomy, the theories that form the bases of modern chemistry, can be readily acquired, and so implanted in the mind that new discoveries and new departures in the application of science to the material progress of the race, shall be easily apprehended and appreciated. Science is the ascertainment of the laws according to which the Divine Mind that is the unresting spring of all the movements of the universe elects to work. We, as the highest known products of this Mind, and occupying a filial relation to our Creator, must of necessity feel a thrill of awe and joy at every new perception of His ways and new instance of our power to understand Him. . . . It is unpardonable in any man to be indifferent to the truths of physical science, being, as they are, the sign-manual of the Creator.

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We are inclined highly to commend choice biographies. Our motive in taking home the written life of a great man is the sympathetic introduction of our souls to aims, purposes, conception and plan of life, nobler than we, perchance, have been accustomed to cherish. We see virtue in action. It is a peepshow into another soul. . . . On the whole, we do not know a better equipment for the first shelves of youth or maiden's library than a well-chosen set of biographies of men and women who have struggled, fallen, risen again, suffered, been tempted, fought, conquered, and held on to the last, steadfast in their faith, enduring to the end, and saved. . . .

Poetry is the most elevating, softening, stimulating form of literature. . . . It draws for us the divine thought and the spiritual significance out of the palpable facts of life, and lifts everything on to a higher plane, where it is suffused with a purer light, and reveals its innermost self, its construction, its veinings, its lights and colours. It cuts and sets the rough diamonds of life, which, till a poet passed that way, were but recognised as pretty pebbles. To all men or women who are striving to gain power over the minds around them, poetry of the best kind is simply a necessity. The poet's insight into problems that vex the spirit of the age, and his soft but sure action on that spirit, make it necessary for all who would fight in the front rank to read the poets. . . .

Let us set up our warning signpost against the way of vague and discursive reading. We should read with a distinct aim, not omnivorously, not to gain the applause bestowed on a great reader, but with a purpose spreading out beyond ourselves, a purpose to gain for ourselves in order that we may pass on to others the light, the warmth, the food, the healing power that lies hidden on the shelves of a great library. In the words of St. Bernard: "Sunt qui scire volunt ut sciant, et turpis curiositas est; ut sciantur, et vanitas est; ut scientiam vendant, et quæstus turpis est; ut ædificent, et caritas est; ut ædificentur, et prudentia est" [Some there are, who desire to know, in order that they *may* know; and that is an ignoble quest: some, that they may be known; and that is ostentation: some, that they may make merchandise of their knowledge; and that is a base traffic: some, that they may help and edify others; and that is goodness: some, that they may be themselves edified; and that is wisdom.—*Translated by R. R. Dees.*]—*For Good Consideration: "A Table-Talk on Books and Reading."*

EARL LYTTON (OWEN MEREDITH). *b.* 1831.

The best education in the world is that which we insensibly acquire from conversation with our intellectual superiors. The man who has studied a subject is on that subject the intellectual superior of the man who has not. And listening to a good lecturer is the next best thing to talking with a man of leading mind. It is, however, not to the museum, or the lecture-room, or the drawing-school, but to the library, that we must go for the completion of our humanity. It is books that bear from age to age the intellectual wealth of the world. . . . Indeed, I would not counsel you to exclude from the smallest library the masterpieces of foreign literature. Only let them be masterpieces. Even the most limited literary culture must include at least some knowledge of the highest thoughts and deepest feelings of ages and nations not our own. Cheap and excellent translations now give us access to all the supreme literatures of ancient Greece and Rome; and to know nothing of them is to know nothing of the intellectual ancestry of our own minds. . . .

There are just a few words which I have much at heart to say to you on behalf of that department of literature which, belonging to pure imagination and fancy, has no direct connection with what we commonly call useful knowledge. Mankind owes all its intellectual and social progress—aye, even its moral sublimity—to that little fruitful germ of imagination, that restless faculty of wonder, which Nature has beneficently implanted in the mind of every child. Do not suppose that the cultivation and enjoyment of this faculty can be of no use to you in the arts and industries on which you are engaged. Its uses are incalculable. In learning to know other things, and other minds, we become more intimately acquainted with ourselves, and are to ourselves better worth knowing. In our own nature, as it expands, we find a sweeter yet less selfish companionship. All that we have read and learned, all that has occupied and interested us in the thoughts and deeds of men abler or wiser than ourselves, constitutes at last a spiritual society of which we can never be deprived, for it rests in the heart and soul of the man who has acquired it. And though it is independent of the world around us, yet in that world also it enlarges the sphere of our sympathies; so that our affections are deepened as our aspirations are uplifted by it.—*Address to the Members of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution and Literary Society, October* 4, 1882.

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON.

b. 1834.

People whose time for reading is limited ought not to waste it in grammars and dictionaries, but to confine themselves resolutely to a couple of languages, or three at the very utmost, notwithstanding the contempt of polyglots, who estimate your learning by the variety of your tongues. It is a fearful throwing away of time, from the literary point of view, to begin more languages than you can master or retain, and to be always puzzling yourself about irregular verbs. . . .

The encouraging inference which you may draw from this in reference to your own case is that, since all intellectual men have had more than one pursuit, you may set off your business against the most absorbing of their pursuits, and for the rest be still almost as rich in time as they have been. You may study literature as some painters have studied it, or science as some literary men have studied it. The first step is to establish a regulated economy of your time, so that, without interfering with a due attention to business and to health, you may get two clear hours every day for reading of the best kind. It is not much, some men would tell you that it is not enough, but I purposely fix the expenditure of time at a low figure because I want it to be always practicable consistently with all the duties and necessary pleasures of your life. If I told you to read four hours every day, I know beforehand what would be the consequence. You would keep the rule for three or four days, by an effort, then some engagement would occur to break it, and you would have no rule at all. And please observe that the two hours are to be given quite regularly, because, when the time given is not much, regularity is quite essential. Two hours a day, regularly, make more than seven hundred hours in a year, and in seven hundred hours, wisely and uninterruptedly occupied, much may be done in anything. Permit me to insist upon that word *uninterruptedly.* Few people realize the full evil of an interruption, few people know all that is implied by it. . . .

But now suppose a reader perfectly absorbed in his author, an author belonging very likely to another age and another civilization entirely different from ours. Suppose that you are reading the Defence of Socrates in Plato, and have the whole scene before you as in a picture: the tribunal of the Five Hundred, the pure Greek architecture, the interested Athenian public, the odious Melitus, the envious enemies, the beloved and grieving friends whose names are dear to us, and immortal; and in the centre you see one figure draped like a poor man, in cheap and common cloth, that he wears winter and summer, with a face plain to downright ugliness, but an air of such genuine courage and self-possession that no acting could imitate it; and you hear the firm voice saying—

> The man, then, judges me worthy of death.
> Be it so.

You are just beginning the splendid paragraph where Socrates condemns himself to maintenance in the Prytaneum, and if you can only be safe from interruption till it is finished, you will have one of those minutes of noble pleasure which are the rewards of intellectual toil. But if you are reading in the daytime in a house where there are women and children, or where people can fasten upon you for pottering details of business, you may be sure that you will *not* be able to get to the end of the passage without in some way or other being rudely awakened from your dream, and suddenly brought back into the common world. The loss intellectually is greater than anyone who had not suffered from it could imagine. People think that an interruption is merely the unhooking of an electric chain, and that the current will flow, when the chain is hooked on again just as it did before. To the intellectual and imaginative student an interruption is not that; it is the destruction of a picture. . . .

There is a degree of incompatibility between the fashionable and the intellectual lives, which makes it necessary, at a certain time, to choose one or the other as our own. There is no hostility, there need not be any uncharitable feeling on one side or the other, but there must be a resolute choice between the two. If you decide for the intellectual life, you will incur a definite loss to set against your gain. Your existence may have calmer and profounder satisfactions, but it will be less amusing, and even in an appreciable degree less *human;* less in harmony, I mean, with the common instincts and feelings of humanity. For the fashionable world, although decorated by habits of expense, has enjoyment for its objects, and arrives at enjoyment by those methods which the experience of generations has proved most efficacious. Variety of amusement, frequent change of scenery and society, healthy exercise, pleasant occupation of the mind without fatigue—these things do indeed make existence agreeable to human nature, and the science of living agreeably is better understood in the fashionable society of England than by laborious students and *savans.* The life led by that society is the true heaven of the natural man, who likes to have frequent feasts and a hearty appetite, who enjoys the varying spectacle of wealth, and splendour, and pleasure, who loves to watch, from the Olympus of his personal ease, the curious results of labour in which he takes no part, the interesting ingenuity of the toiling world below. In exchange for these varied pleasures of the spectator, the intellectual life can offer you but one satisfaction; for all its promises are reducible simply to this, that you shall come at last, after infinite labour, into contact with some great *reality*—that you shall knew and do in such sort that you will feel yourself on firm ground and be recognized—probably not much applauded, but yet recognized—as a fellow-labourer by other knowers and doers. Before you come to this, most of your present accomplishments will be abandoned by yourself as unsatisfactory and insufficient, but one or two of them will be turned to better account, and will give you after many years a tranquil self-respect, and what is still rarer and better, a very deep and earnest reverence for the greatness which is above you. Severed from the vanities of the Illusory, you will live with the realities of knowledge, as one who has quitted the painted scenery of the theatre to listen by the eternal ocean or gaze at the granite hills. . . .

The art of reading is to skip judiciously. Whole libraries may be skipped in these days, when we have the results of them in our modern culture without going over the ground again. And even of the books we decide to read, there are almost always large portions which do not concern us, and which we are sure to forget the day after we have read them. The art is to skip all that does not concern us, whilst missing nothing that we really need. No external guidance can teach us this; for nobody but ourselves can guess what the needs of our intellect may be. But let us select with decisive firmness, independently of other people's advice, independently of the authority of custom. In every newspaper that comes to hand there is a little bit that we ought to read; the art is to find that little bit, and waste no time over the rest. . . .

I used to believe a great deal more in opportunities and less in application than I do now. Time and health are needed, but with these there are always opportunities. Rich people have a fancy for spending money very uselessly on their culture because it seems to them more valuable when it has been costly; but the truth is, that by the blessing of good and cheap literature, intellectual light has become almost as accessible as daylight. I have a rich friend who travels more, and buys more costly things, than I do, but he does not really learn more or advance farther in the twelvemonth. If my days are fully occupied, what has he to set against them? only other well-occupied days, no more. If he is getting benefit at St. Petersburg he is missing the benefit I am getting round my house, and in it. The sum of the year's benefit seems to be surprisingly alike in both cases So if you are reading a piece of thoroughly good literature, Baron Rothschild may possibly be as well occupied as you—he is certainly not better occupied. When I open a noble volume I say to myself, "now the only Crœsus that I envy is he who is reading a better book than this." . . .

I willingly concede all that you say against fashionable society as a whole. It is, as you say, frivolous, bent on amusement, incapable of attention sufficiently prolonged to grasp any serious subject, and liable both to confusion and inaccuracy in the ideas which it hastily forms or easily receives. You do right, assuredly, not to let it waste your most valuable hours, but I believe also that you do wrong in keeping out of it altogether.

The society which seems so frivolous in masses contains individual members who, if you knew them better, would be able and willing to render you the most efficient intellectual help, and you miss this help by restricting yourself exclusively to books. Nothing can replace the conversation of living men and women; not even the richest literature can replace it. . . .

The solitude which is really injurious is the severance from all who are capable of understanding us. Painters say that they cannot work effectively for very long together when separated from the society of artists, and that they must return to London, or Paris, or Rome, to avoid an oppressive feeling of discouragement which paralyses their productive energy. Authors are more fortunate, because all cultivated people are society for them; yet even authors lose strength and agility of thought when too long deprived of a genial intellectual atmosphere. In the country you meet with cultivated individuals; but we need more than this, we need those general conversations in which every speaker is worth listening to.

The life most favourable to culture would have its times of open and equal intercourse with the best minds, and also its periods of retreat. My ideal would be a house in London not far from one or two houses that are so full of light and warmth that it is a liberal education to have entered them, and a solitary tower on some island of the Hebrides, with no companions but the sea-gulls and the thundering surges of the Atlantic. One such island I know well, and it is before my mind's eye, clear as a picture, whilst I am writing. It stands in the very entrance of a fine salt-water loch, rising above two hundred feet out of the water and setting its granite front steep against the western ocean. When the evenings are clear you can see Staffa and Iona like blue clouds between you and the sunset; and on your left, close at hand, the granite hills of Mull, with Ulva to the right across the narrow strait. It was the dream of my youth to build a tower there, with three or four little rooms in it, and walls as strong as a light-house. There have been more foolish dreams, and there have been less competent teachers than the tempests that would have roused me and the calms that would have brought me peace. If any serious thought, if any noble inspiration might have been hoped for, surely it would have been there, where only the clouds and waves were transient, but the ocean before me, and the stars above, and the mountains on either hand, were emblems and evidences of eternity. . . .

Let me recommend certain precautions which taken together are likely to keep you safe. Care for the physical health in the first place, for if there is a morbid mind the bodily organs are not doing their work as they ought to do. Next, for the mind itself, I would heartily recommend hard study, really hard study, taken very regularly but in very moderate quantity. The effect of it on the mind is as bracing as that of cold water on the body, but as you ought not to remain too long in the cold bath, so it is dangerous to study *hard* more than a short time every day. Do some work that is very difficult (such as reading some language that you have to puzzle out *à coups de dictionnaire*) two hours a day regularly, to brace the fighting power of the intellect, but let the rest of the day's work be easier. Acquire especially, if you possibly can, the enviable faculty of getting entirely rid of your work in the intervals of it, and of taking a hearty interest in common things, in a garden, or stable, or dog-kennel, or farm. If the work pursues you—if what is called unconscious cerebration, which ought to go forward without your knowing it, becomes conscious cerebration, and bothers you, then you have been working beyond your cerebral strength, and you are not safe.

An organization which was intended by Nature for the intellectual life cannot be healthy and happy without a certain degree of intellectual activity. Natures like those of Humboldt and Goethe need immense labours for their own felicity, smaller powers need less extensive labour. To all of us who have intellectual needs there is a certain supply of work necessary to perfect health. If we do less, we are in danger of that *ennui* which comes from want of intellectual exercise; if we do more, we may suffer from that other *ennui* which is due to the weariness of the jaded faculties, and this is the more terrible of the two. . . .

The reading practised by most people, by all who do not set before themselves intellectual culture as one of the definite aims of life, is remarkable for the regularity with which it neglects all the great authors of the past. The books provided by the circulating library, the reviews and magazines, the daily newspapers, are read whilst they are novelties, but the standard authors are left on their shelves unopened. We require a firm resolution to resist this invasion of what is new, because it flows like an unceasing river, and unless we protect our time against it by some solid embankment of unshakable rule and resolution, every nook and cranny of it will be filled and flooded. An Englishman whose life was devoted to culture, but who lived in an out-of-the-way place on the Continent, told me that he considered it a decided advantage to his mind to live quite outside of the English library system, because if he wanted to read a new book he had to buy it and pay heavily for carriage besides, which made him very careful in his choice. For the same reason he rejoiced that the nearest English newsroom was two hundred miles from his residence. . . .

For literary men there is nothing so valuable as a window with a cheerful and beautiful prospect. It is good for us to have this refreshment for the eye when we leave off working, and Montaigne* did wisely to have his study up in a tower from which he had extensive views. There is a well-known objection to extensive views as wanting in snugness and comfort, but this objection scarcely applies to the especial case of literary men. What we want is not so much snugness as relief, refreshment, suggestion, and we get these, as a general rule, much better from wide prospects than from limited ones. I have just alluded to Montaigne,—will you permit me to imitate that dear old philosopher in his egotism and describe to you the view from the room I write in, which cheers and amuses me continually? But before describing this, let me describe another of which the recollection is very dear to me and as vivid as a freshly-painted picture. In years gone by, I had only to look up from my desk and see a noble loch in its inexhaustible loveliness, and a mountain in its majesty. It was a daily and hourly delight to watch the breezes play about the enchanted isles, on the delicate silvery surface, dimming some clear reflection, or trailing it out in length, or cutting sharply across it with acres of rippling blue. It was a frequent pleasure to see the clouds play about the crest of Cruachan and Ben Vorich's golden head, grey mists that crept upwards from the valleys till the sunshine suddenly caught them and made them brighter than the snows they shaded. And the leagues and leagues of heather on the lower land to the southward that became like the aniline dyes of deepest purple and blue, when the sky was grey in the evening—all save one orange-streak! Ah, those were spectacles never to be forgotten, splendours of light and glory, and sadness of deepening gloom when the eyes grew moist in the twilight and secretly drank their tears.—*The Intellectual Life.*

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* The reader will find Montaigne's description of his study at page 25 of this volume.

FRANK CARR (LAUNCELOT CROSS).

b. 1834.

The Library entered, the door closed, no sound to break the solemn hush which reigns around, one soon discerns how manifold are the ways in which the mind is tranquillized, deliciously solicited and sustained in its attention, by the sweet synod of Book-souls. Here it is good to be, in every mood; here, you can raise pleasure to her height; you can, also, purge off the gloom which overcasts the mind in outer concerns, and heal the scar of the world's corrosive fires, if you will only make a beginning, if you will, indeed, only come hither. . . .

For men are here in abundance,—aye, the very flower of mankind. Generally, when living, these, in their highest moods, were *solitaires* to their fellows. Not through any lack of feelings of attachment, or repugnance to companionship, but for the better intercourse of their souls they joined themselves to a great spiritual society. And here is such a society; Not a mean soul is present. . . . In this inviolate asylum we obtain knowledge, health, and recompense. We are consoled for the short-comings of the day, for all its injuries and miseries. So assured have I become of this, that I myself battle with lightheartedness against the evils of the busy hours; I outwind them, knowing that I triumph if I but hold out till the evening. We can murmur sweet words of solace to ourselves, as a lover who has obtained his lady's grace, and whose loneliness becomes brightened by her presence. Murmurs such as these:—Tired of the outer world, we have a larger, lovelier, more enduring one here. Ever give us this radiant seigniory of books, and we have herewith sufficient mental intercourse; the men we meet and mingle with are but fleeting phantoms, fleeting as vain,—these are substantial immortalities. . . .

There is a pleasure in reading; a finer pleasure in reading and marking passages, which strike us with their power of thought or felicity of style; the finest pleasure consists in re-reading these marked passages. This process condenses an author into a few passages, it may be a few sentences. . . .

Perhaps the humbler a man begins, the richer and happier he is. The truest owner of a Library is he who has bought each book for the love he bears to it; who is happy and content to say,—"Here are my jewels; my choicest material possessions!" who is proud to crown such assertion, thus,—"I am content that this Library shall represent the use of the talents given me by Heaven!" That man's Library, though not commensurate with his love for Books, will demonstrate what he has been able to accomplish with his resources; it will denote economy of living, eagerness to possess the particles that compose his Library, and quick watchfulness to seize them, when means and opportunities serve. Such a man has built a temple, of which each brick has been the subject of curious and acute intelligent examination and appreciation before it has been placed in the sacred building.

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In the light of common day is the preciousness of Books evinced. Sara Coleridge's plain-spoken affirmation is as true as though hedged round by gospel proofs, when she wrote to her elder brother—"A genuine love of Books is one of the greatest things in life for man or woman . . . . and may be enjoyed without the neglect of any duty." This language breathes humble household air. . . .

Thus, we fall back for our salvation on our chief loves. These may not be the law-givers of literature—the leading souls—which refer to the essential existence of Books, and almost to our own; they may be of the lower orders of the literary hierarchy—those to which we are espoused for the sake of ready culture and entertainment. Nevertheless, they are adequate to bring us immediate power, pleasure, and restoration. Their soft, low voices lead us on step by step, without confusion or sense of unrest, or fill the mind with a tranquil felicity, untroubled by a void or desire.

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Sympathy through Books has indeed a divineness in it; attachments may spring up which the world's spirit cannot comprehend; which are uninfluenced by opinions or diverse lines of reading, and which decay not with the lapse of years. The amenities of literature are innumerable, and their delicacy and deliciousness denote not fragility; they do not wither on the threshold of the Library, nor sink into the darkness of the grave; there is the immortality of the tenderness and beauty, which smile over all the universe, and in the fields of heaven.

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Ever thus ready, sympathetic, and courageous—it shall be discovered that Thought becomes younger and more beautiful through Age—as it is with souls in heaven; that through it we have all our years—the centuries behind are ours, in all their freshness, and our own youth never loses its garlands, but comes back with all its transports when Age wears wisdom's snow. Thus, in a very distinct manner, a Book—a true Book is but the soliloquy of one's own spirit.—*Hesperides: "The Library."*

Here let us face the last question of all:—In the shade and valley of Life, on what shall we repose? When we must withdraw from the scenes which our own energies and agonies have somewhat helped to make glorious; when the windows are darkened, and the sound of the grinding is low—where shall we find the beds of asphodel? Can any couch be more delectable than that amidst the Elysian leaves of Books? The occupation of the morning and the noon determines the affections, which will continue to seek their old nourishment when the grand climacteric has been reached.—*Hesperides: "Elect Book Spirits."*

JAMES PAYN. *b.* 1830.

What I would speak of now is the engrossing and all-absorbing quality of books. Reflection itself, of course, possesses the same attribute, in a less degree; but we cannot sit down to reflect at a moment's notice—deeply or earnestly enough to forget what is passing around us—and be perfectly sure of doing it, any more than we can be sure of going to sleep when we wish to do so. Now, a congenial book can be taken up by any lover of books, with the certainty of its transporting the reader within a few minutes to a region immeasurably removed from that which he desires to quit. . . . Books are the blessed chloroform of the mind. We wonder how folks in trouble did without them in old time.

It is not a very high claim that is here set forth on behalf of Literature—that of Pass-time, and yet what a blessed boon even that is! Conceive the hours of *inertia* (a thing different from idleness) that it has mercifully consumed for us! hours wherein nothing could be done, nothing, perhaps, be *thought*, of our own selves, by reason of some impending calamity.

I am writing of the obligation which we owe to Literature, and not to Religion; yet I cannot but feel "thankful"—using the word in its ordinary and devotional sense—to many a book which is no sermon, nor tract, nor commentary, nor anything of that kind at all. Thus, I have cause to revere the name of Defoe, who reached his hand down through a century and a half to wipe away bitter tears from my childish eyes. The going back to school was always a dreadful woe to me, casting its black shadow far into the latter part of my brief holidays. I have had my share of suffering and sorrow since, like other men, but I have seldom felt so absolutely wretched as when, a little boy, I was about to exchange my pleasant home-life for the hardships and uncongenialities of school. . . . And yet, I protest, I had but to take up *Robinson Crusoe*, and in a very few minutes I was out of all thought of the approaching calamity. . . . I had travelled over a thousand leagues of sea, I was in my snug well-fortified cave, with the ladder upon the right side of it, "so that neither man nor beast could get at me," with my half-a-dozen muskets loaded, and my powder distributed in separate parcels, so that not even a thunderbolt should do me any irreparable injury. Or, if not quite so secure, I was visiting my summer plantation among my goats and corn, or shooting, in the still astonished woods, birds of marvellous beauty; or lying upon my stomach upon the top of the hill, watching through my spy-glass the savages putting to sea, and not displeased to find myself once more alone in my own little island. No living human being could just then have done me such a service as dead Defoe.

Again, during that agonising period which intervened between my proposal of marriage by letter to Jemima Anne, and my reception of her reply, how should I ever have kept myself alive, save for the chivalrous aid of the Black Knight in *Ivanhoe*. To him, mainly, assisted by Rebecca, and (I am bound to say) by that scoundrel Brian de Bois Guilbert, are my obligations due, that I did not—through the extremities of despair and hope, suffered during that interval—become a drivelling idiot.

When her answer did arrive—in the negative—what was it which preserved me from the noose, the razor, or the stream, but Mr. Carlyle's *French Revolution*. In the woes of poor Louis Capet, I forgot my own. . . . Who, having a grateful heart, can forget these things, or deny the Blessedness of Books? If it were only for the hours of weary waiting which they have consumed for me at desolate railway stations, I pay them grateful homage.

Nay, under far more serious circumstances, when disappointment has lain heavy on my soul, and once when ruin itself seemed overshadowing me and mine, what escape have I not found from irremediable woes in taking the hand of Samuel Johnson (kindly introduced to that great man by Mr. Boswell), and hearing him discourse with wondrous wisdom upon all things under heaven, sometimes at a club of wits and men of letters, and sometimes at a common tavern table, and sometimes even in an open boat upon the Hebridean seas.

I often think, if such be the fascination exercised by books upon their readers, how wondrous must be the enchantment wrought upon the Writers themselves! What human sorrow can afflict, what prosperity dazzle them, while they are describing the fortunes of the offspring of their own imagination? They have only to close their study door, and take their magic pen in hand, and lo! they are at once transported from this weary world of duns, and critics, and publishers, into whatever region and time they will. Yes, truly, it is for authors themselves, more than for any other order of men whatever, to acknowledge the Blessedness of Books.—*Chambers's Journal: "The Blessedness of Books," vol.* 41, *p.* 577.

GEORGE J. GOSCHEN. *b.* 1831.

Such studies as these will enable you to live, and to move, and to think, in a world different from the narrow world by which you are surrounded. These studies will open up to you sources of amusement which, I think I may say, will often rise into happiness.

I wish you, by the aid of the training which I recommend, to be able to look beyond your own lives, and have pleasure in surroundings different from those in which you move. I want you to be able—and mark this point—to sympathise with other times, to be able to understand the men and women of other countries, and to have the intense enjoyment—an enjoyment which, I am sure, you would all appreciate—of mental change of scene. I do not only want you to know dry facts; I am not only looking to a knowledge of facts, nor chiefly to that knowledge. I want the heart to be stirred as well as the intellect. I want you to feel more and live more than you can do if you only know what surrounds yourselves. I want the action of the imagination, the sympathetic study of history and travels, the broad teaching of the poets, and, indeed, of the best writers of other times and other countries, to neutralise and check the dwarfing influences of necessarily narrow careers and necessarily stunted lives. That is the point which you will see I mean when I ask you to cultivate the imagination. I want to introduce you to other, wider, and nobler fields of thought, and to open up vistas of other worlds, whence refreshing and bracing breezes will stream upon your minds and souls. . . .

And do not believe for one moment that the cultivation of the faculty of imagination will disgust you or disqualify you for your daily tasks. I hold a very contrary view. I spoke just now of mental change of scene; and as the body is better for a change of scene and a change of air, so I believe that the mind is also better for occasional changes of mental atmosphere.

I do not believe that it is good either for men or women always to be breathing the atmosphere of the business in which they are themselves engaged. You know how a visit to the seaside sometimes brings colour to the cheeks and braces the limbs. Well, so I believe that that mental change of scene which I recommend will bring colour into your minds, will brace you to greater activity, and will in every way strengthen both your intellectual and your moral faculties. I want you—if I may use the phrase—to breathe the bracing ozone of the imagination. And over what worlds will not fancy enable you to roam?—the world of the past, ideal worlds, and other worlds beyond your sight, probably brighter worlds, possibly more interesting worlds than the narrow world in which most of us are compelled to live; at all events, different worlds and worlds that give us change.—*Address: "Cultivation of the Imagination," delivered at the Liverpool Institute, 29th Nov.*, 1877.

I wish to call attention to one of the great drawbacks readers have in the present day. It is the mass of books that exists, the constantly multiplied quantity, that oppresses readers. They stand aghast at the quantity of literature they have to face when they begin to read. And I think this is one of the great dangers of our times. It is not the multiplicity itself which is the evil; on the contrary, when the books are good it is an advantage. But the evil lies in this idea, that one must read everything, especially all the new books that come out. "Have you read such and such a book?" is the question constantly asked. "No."

"Oh! there is a great deal said about that book; it is a very good book." "Well, I will order it from the library." This is the course that readers constantly take. They do not ask: "How does the book fit into the course of my systematic reading?" and they think they read that good book. I presume they read it in a fashion; but do they think at all of what they read? I would very earnestly put it to the students who are here that it is not necessary to read everything that comes out; but systematic reading will give more enjoyment and secure more profit than this desire to read everything. . . .

This multiplicity of books, joined to the belief that they are read, has led to an interesting phenomenon. It is that, as people's powers of reading are limited and still they want to read everything, the condensing process is applied in a more marked shape. Formerly we had quarterly reviews which criticised and analysed books, and many people thought when they read an article in a quarterly that that was enough, and that they need not read the book at all. The articles in the quarterlies extend to thirty pages, but thirty pages is too much. So a further condensing process has gone on, and you have now *The Fortnightly*, *The Contemporary*, and *The Nineteenth Century*, which reduce thirty pages to fifteen pages, in order that you may read a large number of articles in a shorter time and in a shorter form. As if this condensing process were not enough, the condensed articles of these periodicals are further condensed by the daily papers, who will give you a summary of the summary of all the reviews. This appears to me to have a very deleterious effect on serious reading in many ways. It tends to destroy the taste for it. Those who are dipping into so many subjects, and gathering information in a summary and superficial form lose the habit of settling down to great works which, while they might not give them so much contemporary information, will do much to lift them out of their daily lives and give them access to the high and noble thoughts which have been uttered by the chief authors of all countries. Ephemeral literature is driving out the great classics of the present and the past. I warn you against this tendency, and I entreat you as students to give some of that time which you have at your disposal to the study of serious works requiring thought.

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Both in reading and in thinking you never get far unless you will have a long consecutive *tête-à-tête* with your book or with your problem. People read and think in the same way that they visit their acquaintances and friends. They have an exciting conversation for a few minutes and then the visit is over. If you wish to see a landscape or explore a character you must take time, and it must be done by steady, consistent, and continuous thought. I bespeak, therefore, for reading and for thinking greater deliberation, more careful choice of material, more consecutiveness and continuity, and above all, that it should never become necessary to hurry through anything, whether it be lecture, or book, or problem.—*Address on Hearing, Reading, and Thinking, to the Students of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching, February* 27, 1886.

JOHN LUBBOCK. *b.* 1834.

Many readers, I think, miss much of the pleasure of reading by forcing themselves to dwell too long continuously on one subject. In a long railway journey, for instance, many persons take only a single book. The consequence is that, unless it is a story, after half an hour or an hour they are quite tired of it. Whereas, if they had two, or still better three, on different subjects, and one of them being of an amusing character, they would probably find that, by changing as soon as they felt at all weary, they would come back again and again to each with renewed zest, and hour after hour would pass pleasantly away. Every one, of course, must judge for himself, but such at least is my experience.

I quite agree, therefore, with Lord Iddesleigh as to the charm of desultory reading, but the wider the field the more important that we should benefit by the very best books in each class. Not that we need confine ourselves to them, but that we should commence with them, and they will certainly lead us on to others. There are, of course, some books which we must read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. But these are exceptions. As regards by far the larger number, it is probably better to read them quickly, dwelling only on the best and most important passages. In this way, no doubt, we shall lose much, but we gain more by ranging over a wider field. We may, in fact, I think, apply to reading Lord Brougham's wise dictum as regards education, and say that it is well to read everything of something, and something of everything. In this way only we can ascertain the bent of our own tastes, for it is a general, though not of course an invariable, rule, that we profit little by books which we do not enjoy.

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We may sit in our library and yet be in all quarters of the earth. We may travel round the world with Captain Cook or Darwin, with Kingsley or Ruskin, who will show us much more perhaps than ever we should see for ourselves. The world itself has no limits for us; Humboldt and Herschel will carry us far away to the mysterious nebulæ, far beyond the sun and even the stars; time has no more bounds than space; history stretches out behind us, and geology will carry us back for millions of years before the creation of man, even to the origin of the material Universe itself. We are not limited even to one plane of thought. Aristotle and Plato will transport us into a sphere none the less delightful because it requires some training to appreciate it. We may make a library, if we do but rightly use it, a true paradise on earth, a garden of Eden without its one drawback, for all is open to us, including and especially the fruit of the tree of knowledge for which we are told that our first mother sacrificed all the rest. Here we may read the most important histories, the most exciting volumes of travels and adventures, the most interesting stories, the most beautiful poems; we may meet the most eminent statesmen and poets and philosophers, benefit by the ideas of the greatest thinkers, and enjoy all the greatest creations of human genius.—*The Pleasures of Life: "A Song of Books."*

G. O. TREVELYAN. *b.* 1838.

The true writer is much, but the true reader is something likewise. And, indeed, when we study the lives of those favoured and honoured few who were really and genuinely both true readers and true writers it is worthy of notice that they were proud, with a deeper and purer pride, of their love of books than of their faculty for producing them. Shelley regarded himself as a student who was a poet at odd hours. Gibbon did not set so high a value on his history as on that "invincible love of reading" which, to use his own words, he would not exchange against the treasures of India. Cowper never wrote so straight from the heart as when he described the joys of the hour when the curtains are drawn upon the lamplight and firelight of a winter's evening to be spent in converse with the best company of all ages and nations; and, although, we cannot all be Gibbons and Cowpers, though it would be hard indeed to supply the annual demands of this banquet if such a standard of excellence were exacted, we can at any rate strive to emulate those great men in their disinterested devotion to letters. The Muse, like other women that are worthy the name, gives her choicest favours not to those who court her for the wealth, the fame, the fashion which are among her attributes, but to the humble and loyal admirer who loves her for herself. And among the list of those who love literature for itself he alone can claim to be enrolled, who, as long as he has books and leisure to read them, is never consciously poor, never entirely unhappy, never solitary, never unemployed. He alone is a true reader who can make a profession of reading, as men make a profession of scientific research, of travel, and, still more often, of field sports; and who leaves his library for municipal or philanthropic business or for the sterner work of politics, not because he feels any need for the distraction or employment, but because he thinks it incumbent on him to do something in his generation and for his generation in order to earn his right of living on the earth.—*Speech delivered at the Royal Academy Banquet, April* 30*th*, 1887.

JOHN MORLEY. *b.* 1838.

The love of literature awakens every faculty, refines every sentiment, and elevates every emotion; while wealth is hard to acquire, and when acquired is difficult to keep, and, when both gained and retained, is apt to fret away the soul of the possessor in sordid care,—while honours and worldly fame are quite attainable without conferring any substantial satisfaction upon those who have grasped them,—while even domestic felicity may by force of circumstances become a source of poignant grief, and leave us environed by the blackness of inconsolable sorrow; while all these are fleeting and unsubstantial, the sober pleasures of knowledge abide with us so long as intellect itself remains, and give us employment and consolation even when evil days come, and years draw nigh when we say, There is no pleasure in them.

. . . .

It would be well for the general student to recognise at the outset that no solid advance, even in general learning, can be made by the cleverest man without some surrender of social joys, and without the endurance of much painful labour. The labour will in time cease to be painful, and will assuredly produce a more than adequate reward; but the toil of him who goes forth with harrow, plough, and seed-basket, in order that he may eventually reap a material harvest, is not more unavoidable to the husbandman, than are the self-denial and the plodding which lead to the mental harvest of matured views, expanded emotions, and enlarged principles, to the student who would ponder over in the closet what may make him an intelligent actor in human affairs.

. . . . . .

Professor Max Muller, in considering the diametrically opposed doctrines of Adam Smith and Leibnitz, makes the following admirable observations:—"There are two ways of judging former philosophers. One is to put aside their opinions as simply erroneous when they differ from our own. . . . Another way is to try to enter fully into the opinions of those from whom we differ—to make them, for a time at least, our own, till at last we discover the point of view from which each philosopher looked at the facts before him, and catch the light in which he regarded them. We shall then find that there is much less of downright error in the history of philosophy, than is commonly supposed; nay, we shall find nothing so conducive to a right appreciation of truth, as a right appreciation of the error by which it is surrounded."

. . . . . .

Concern yourself only with the attainment of truth, without respect to the ultimate conclusions which may be derived from it. Be not misled from this by the traditional respect or disrespect paid to writers, but form your own judgment. Adopt no principle, endorse no doctrine, without careful examination on your own part. Finally, respect all opinions which are supported by argument, however untenable they may seem. And above all, bear in mind Sir Thomas Browne's old saying—"I could never divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, nor be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that from which, within a few days, I should dissent myself."

. . . . . .

I believe that the main object of literary culture at the present time ought to be to counteract the dominant tendencies flowing from the money-getting pursuits of the age, and so, without lessening the energy and attention at present devoted to those pursuits, to check the evil consequences apt to result from them, by the cultivation of tastes and habits of thought of an opposite, or rather, perhaps I should say, of a wholly different kind. As the ardent longing after money inclines a man to be self-seeking to an excessive extent, he should, if he would preserve a proper mental balance, devote as much time as he can spare, after the performance of his money-getting labours, to the investigation of subjects which may teach him the worth of money, and the fact that there are gifts which mere wealth can never purchase, nor mere opulence ever enjoy; that his interests as a human being are not confined to the narrow circle of his own business, but are co-extensive with those of the race to which he belongs; and that such interests are only promoted by a careful adherence to generous principles and the purest rectitude.

. . . . . .

The consolation of reading is not futile nor imaginary. It is no chimera of the recluse or the bookworm, but a potent reality. As a stimulus to flagging energies, as an inspirer of lofty aim, literature stands unrivalled. In the life of all, blank days come when we are inclined to envy those who say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" when the spirit of our youthful enthusiasm, like the ghost of some betrayed love, rises up and stands reproachfully before us, recalling the resolutions and aspirations of the past; reminding us how base and unworthy we should in those times have deemed the indolence and want of faith of these; and mutely asking if age, instead of ripening our wisdom and strengthening our will, has drawn a thick film over the eyes of our faith, and paralysed the right hand of our purpose. In moments like these, the lofty themes of poetry, the grandeur of history, and the noble examples of biography, kindle in those who will have recourse to them, a new energy and a fresh heart. This powerful quality of literature is not sufficiently recognised nor employed. Men know not the great agent of restoration which lies so near their hand. Other resources are not available in every circumstance, at all times, and at all ages; but literature—the song of the poet, the meditations of the philosopher, the records of the historian, and the lives of men who have left great names upon the earth—this (to use the language of Cicero) is at once the instructor and guide of youth, and the comfort and grace of our riper years; it is an adornment to prosperity, a refuge and a solace in adversity; in private it is our delight, in public our help; and whether at home or abroad, whether in town or country, by day or by night, it remains an abiding joy and employment.—*Remarks on Reading, delivered at the Blackburn Mechanics' Institute,* 1864.

You could scarcely do a hard-working man of whatever class a greater service than to give him easy access to French literature. Montesquieu used to say that he had never known a pain or a distress which he could not soothe by half an hour of a good book; and perhaps it is no more of an exaggeration to say that a man who can read French with comfort need never have a dull hour. Our own literature has assuredly many a kingly name. In boundless riches and infinite imaginative variety, there is no rival to Shakespeare in the world; in energy and height and majesty Milton and Burke have no masters. But beside its great men of this loftier sort, France has a long list of authors who have produced a literature whose chief mark is its agreeableness. As has been so often said, the genius of the French language is its clearness, firmness, and order; to this clearness certain circumstances in the history of French society have added the delightful qualities of liveliness in union with urbanity. Now as one of the most important parts of popular education is to put people in the way of amusing and refreshing themselves in a rational rather than an irrational manner, it is a great gain to have given them the key to the most amusing and refreshing set of books in the world.

. . . .

What we see every day with increasing clearness is that not only the well-being of the many, but the chances of exceptional genius, moral or intellectual, in the gifted few, are highest in a society where the *average* interest, curiosity, capacity, are all highest. The moral of this for you and for me is plain. We cannot, like Beethoven or Handel, lift the soul by the magic of divine melody into the seventh heaven of ineffable vision and hope incommensurable; we cannot, like Newton, weigh the far-off stars in a balance, and measure the heavings of the eternal flood; we cannot, like Voltaire, scorch up what is cruel and false, by a word as a flame, nor, like Milton or Burke, awaken men's hearts with the note of an organ-trumpet; we cannot, like the great saints of the churches and the great sages of the schools, add to those acquisitions of spiritual beauty and intellectual mastery which have, one by one, and little by little, raised man from being no higher than the brute to be only a little lower than the angels. But what we can do—the humblest of us in this great hall—is by diligently using our own minds and diligently seeking to extend our own opportunities to others, to help to swell that common tide, on the force and the set of whose currents depends the prosperous voyaging of humanity. When our names are blotted out, and our place knows us no more, the energy of each social service will remain, and so too, let us not forget, will each social disservice remain, like the unending stream of one of nature's forces. The thought that this is so, may well lighten the poor perplexities of our daily life, and even soothe the pang of its calamities; it lifts us from our feet as on wings, opening a larger meaning to our private toil and a higher purpose to our public endeavour; it makes the morning as we awake to its welcome, and the evening like a soft garment as it wraps us about; it nerves our arm with boldness against oppression and injustice, and strengthens our voice with deeper accents against falsehood, while we are yet in the full noon of our days—yes, and perhaps it will shed some ray of consolation, when our eyes are growing dim to it all, and we go down into the Valley of Darkness.—*Address on Popular Culture, in Birmingham, Oct.* 5, 1876.

I do not believe for my part that a man really needs to have a very great many books. Pattison said that nobody who respected himself could have less than one thousand volumes. He pointed out that you can stack one thousand octavo volumes in a bookcase that shall be thirteen feet by ten feet, and six inches deep, and that everybody has that space at disposal. Still the point is not that men should have a great many books, but that they should have the right ones, and that they should use those that they have. We may all agree in lamenting that there are so many houses—even some of considerable social pretension—where you will not find a good atlas, a good dictionary, or a good cyclopædia of reference. What is still more lamentable, in a good many more houses where these books are, they are never referred to or opened. That is a very discreditable fact, because I defy anybody to take up a copy of the *Times* newspaper—and I speak in the presence of gentlemen well up in all that is going on in the world—and not come upon something in it, upon which they would be wise to consult an atlas, dictionary, or cyclopædia of reference.

. . . . . .

I frankly admit that the habit and power of reading with reflection, comprehension, and memory all alert and awake, does not come at once to the natural man any more than many other sovereign virtues come to that interesting creature. What I do submit to you and press upon you with great earnestness is, that it requires no preterhuman force of will in any young man or woman—unless household circumstances are unusually vexatious and unfavourable—to get at least half an hour out of a solid busy day for good and disinterested reading. Some will say that this is too much to expect, and the first persons to say it, I venture to predict, will be those who waste their time most. At any rate, if I cannot get half an hour, I will be content with a quarter. Now, in half an hour I fancy you can read fifteen or twenty pages of Burke; or you can read one of Wordsworth's masterpieces—say the lines on Tintern; or say, one-third—if a scholar, in the original, and if not, in a translation—of a book of the Iliad or the Æneid. I am not filling the half hour too full. But try for yourselves what you can read in half an hour. Then multiply the half hour by 365, and consider what treasures you might have laid by at the end of the year; and what happiness, fortitude, and wisdom they would have given you for a lifetime.

. . . . . .

Literature consists of all the books—and they are not so many—where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity, and attraction of form. My notion of the literary student is one who through books explores the strange voyages of man's moral reason, the impulses of the human heart, the chances and changes that have overtaken human ideals of virtue and happiness, of conduct and manners, and the shifting fortunes of great conceptions of truth and virtue. Poets, dramatists, humorists, satirists, masters of fiction, the great preachers, the character-writers, the maxim-writers, the great political orators—they are all literature in so far as they teach us to know man and to know human nature. This is what makes literature, rightly sifted and selected and rightly studied, not the mere elegant trifling that it is so often and so erroneously supposed to be, but a proper instrument for a systematic training of the imagination and sympathies, and of a genial and varied moral sensibility.

. . . . . .

I am strong for attention to expression, if that attention be exercised in the right way. It has been said a million times that the foundation of right expression in speech or writing is sincerity. It is as true now as it has ever been. Right expression is a part of character. As somebody has said, by learning to speak with precision, you learn to think with correctness; and firm and vigorous speech lies through the cultivation of high and noble sentiments. I think, as far as my observation has gone, that men will do better for reaching precision by studying carefully and with an open mind and a vigilant eye the great models of writing, than by excessive practice of writing on their own account. The English language in its dignity and purity has never been exposed to such dangers as those which beset it to-day. Domestic slang, scientific slang, pseudo-æsthetic affectations, hideous importations from American newspapers, all bear down with horrible force upon the glorious fabric which the genius of our race has reared.—*Address on the Extension of University Teaching, February* 26, 1887.

We may venture to notice the occasional appearance of a very minor defect, which is far too common in all contemporary writing and conversation, but which jars more than usually in so considerable a stylist as Mr. Pater; I mean the use of German and French phrases. It seems just now to be peculiarly the duty of a writer who respects his own language, and has the honourable aspiration of maintaining its purity, strength, and comprehensiveness, carefully to resist every temptation to introduce a single foreign word into his prose upon any pretext whatever. Even quotations from foreign writers ought, as I presume to think, to be given in English, and not in French, German, Greek, Italian, excepting of course quotations in verse, and of these the good prose writer is naturally most sparing in any language.—*Article in Fortnightly Review*, 1873: "*Mr. Pater's Essays.*"

WILLIAM FREELAND. *b.* 1828.

Give me a nook and a book,
  And let the proud world spin round:
Let it scramble by hook or by crook
  For wealth or a name with a sound.
You are welcome to amble your ways,
  Aspirers to place or to glory;
May big bells jangle your praise,
  And golden pens blazon your story!
For me, let me dwell in my nook,
Here, by the curve of this brook,
That croons to the tune of my book,
Whose melody wafts me for ever
On the waves of an unseen river.

Give me a book and a nook
  Far away from the glitter and strife;
Give me a staff and a crook,
  The calm and the sweetness of life:

. . . . . .

Vain world, let me reign in my nook,
King of this kingdom, my book,
A region by fashion forsook:
Pass on, ye lean gamblers for glory,
Nor mar the sweet tune of my story!

A Birth Song and Other Poems. 1882.

FRANCES R. HAVERGAL. 1836—1879.

Only a word of command, but it loses or wins the field;
Only a stroke of the pen, but a heart is broken or healed.

Alexander Lamont. *b.* 1843.

The Book-world is one sphere in which I always find myself youthful in heart and memories. As flowers are the earth's first sweetest mercies, so are books one of the soul's most exquisite delights—frequently the balm for wounded affections, and the genial companions of our silent hours. What memories linger about our acquaintanceship with books? Back through the long years they have been our companions—nay, more, our friends. . . . What glowing revelations and intensity of soul-joy I have experienced in these long bygone years from books, my heart alone can tell. Even now, in my old age, I cling to them with a renewed tenderness, and treat them with a sacred respect, as friends whom I intensely revere, and from whom I fear I shall soon be parted. When surrounded by my choice books, I feel that I am in company vastly better than myself; and there falls on me a subdued hush akin to that reverential feeling which haunts us in the long and shadowy aisles of some grand old cathedral, surrounded by the tombs of the mighty dead. . . . There exists a kind of spiritual freemasonry between a well-regulated mind and good books. No matter in what condition a worthy volume may be found, the moment it meets our eye it seems to nod in recognition, and claim with becoming grace our regard. I often linger about an old book-stall with intense delight, and in the midst of the reverie which I then invariably fall into I have frequently found myself framing a biography for it. . . . How many stories, both sweet and sad, could these volumes tell of homes and hearths? Here is a volume with a short but pathetic inscription on the title page—'twas the affectionate love-gift of a sister to a brother. Are they both now gone to a land where such manifestations are no longer needed, or has a strange and cruel fate brought the sweet token here? In the corner there lies an old volume of the Greek Dramas, well-thumbed and interleaved. Where now the earnest youth who was wont to hang over its pages in the first blush of schoolboy enthusiasm? Is it the old, old story of a premature grave? And is nothing left behind but a sweet memory to a few hearts, and an ever-present sacred gloom to *one* who once thought of him with pride? —*Wayside Wells; or, Thoughts from Deepdale*, 1874.

WILLIAM E. A. AXON. *b.* 1846.

To students and lovers of books, the word library possesses a charm which scarcely any other can claim. To them it means a place where one may withdraw from the hurry and bustle of every-day life, from the cares of commerce and the strife of politics, and hold communion with the saints and heroes of the past; a place where the good and true men of bygone ages, being dead, yet speak, and reprove the vanity and littleness of our lives, where they may excite us to noble deeds, may cheer and console us in defeat, may teach us magnanimity in victory. There we may trace the history of nations, and see that "increasing purpose" which "runs through all the ages," and learn how the "thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns." There we may listen to "the fairy tales of science," or to the voices of the poets singing their undying songs.

Every man should have a library. The works of the grandest masters of literature may now be procured at prices that place them within the reach almost of the very poorest, and we may all put Parnassian singing birds into our chambers to cheer us with the sweetness of their songs. And when we have got our little library we may look proudly at Shakspeare, and Bacon, and Bunyan, as they stand in our bookcase in company with other noble spirits, and one or two of whom the world knows nothing, but whose worth we have often tested. These may cheer and enlighten us, may inspire us with higher aims and aspirations, may make us, if we use them rightly, wiser and better men.

Ignorance is a prolific mother of vice and crime, and whatever tends to destroy ignorance aims a blow also at the existence of crime. . . . Surely a people who make bosom friends of the wise and good will become better men than they were before, by reason of that companionship. The spoken word as an instrument of education is now becoming of minor importance, and the printed voice is taking its place, chief engine in the dissemination of thought. "An intelligent class can scarcely ever be, as a class, vicious," says Everett. Those who have tasted the sweets of intellectual pleasures will hardly care to descend to lower and grosser forms of enjoyment, and a people familiar with those lessons of wisdom and truth taught by the mighty dead, can hardly fail to be a nation wise, and just, and true.—*Article on Free Public Libraries, in "Meliora," October*, 1867.

ANDREW LANG. *b.* 1844.

Ballade of the Book-Hunter.

In torrid heats of late July,
  In March, beneath the bitter *bise*,
He book-hunts while the loungers fly,—
  He book-hunts, though December freeze;
In breeches baggy at the knees,
  And heedless of the public jeers,
For these, for these, he hoards his fees,
  Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

No dismal stall escapes his eye,
  He turns o'er tomes of low degrees,
There soiled romanticists may lie,
  Or Restoration comedies;
Each tract that flutters in the breeze
  For him is charged with hopes and fears,
In mouldy novels fancy sees
  Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

With restless eyes that peer and spy,
  Sad eyes that heed not skies nor trees,
In dismal nooks he loves to pry,
  Whose motto evermore is *Spes!*
But ah! the fabled treasure flees;
  Grown rarer with the fleeting years,
In rich men's shelves they take their ease,—
  Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs!

ENVOY.

Prince, all the things that teaze and please,—
  Fame, hope, wealth, kisses, cheers, and tears,
What are they but such toys as these—
  Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs?

XXII. Ballades in Blue China.

Yet are we so made that each man will think of some authors as if they had served him better than others, the truth being that these are the authors with whom he is most in sympathy, and in whom he best recognizes something of himself; they are the brothers, or, rather, the chosen friends, of his soul. They have sat with him and conversed with him when ashes were on his head, and sackcloth was the raiment of his spirit, or they have walked and talked with him on the sunny ways of youth, and rested with him at the water-side; their books have been often in his pocket and their verses always on his lips. . . . If any young man or woman interested in letters chances to read this paper, which is a kind of confession, perhaps, I should like to say,—Do read good books, and don't read magazines and newspapers. The best books are few; to know them is a joy that does not perish. Knowing them, you can at all times enter the haunted country, and find your favourite places, and be at rest with that which is perfect, make acquaintance with the masters, with the immortals. There are no such good friends as they are.—"*Books that have Helped Me*" *in The Forum, an American Periodical. June,* 1887.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE (AMERICAN DIVINE).

Let us thank God for books. When I consider what some books have done for the world, and what they are doing, how they keep up our hope, awaken new courage and faith, soothe pain, give an ideal life to those whose homes are hard and cold, bind together distant ages and foreign lands, create new worlds of beauty, bring down truths from heaven—I give eternal blessings for this gift, and pray that we may use it aright, and abuse it not.

AUSTIN DOBSON. *b.* 1840.

My Books.

. . . .

But the row that I prize is yonder,
  Away on the unglazed shelves,
The bulged and the bruised *octavos*,
  The dear and the dumpy twelves,—
Montaigne with his sheepskin blistered,
  And Howell the worse for wear,
And the worm-drilled Jesuit's Horace,
  And the little old cropped Molière,—
And the Burton I bought for a florin,
  And the Rabelais foxed and flea'd,—
For the others I never have opened,
  But those are the ones I read.

Longman's Magazine, April, 1883.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. *b.* 1850.

Every book is, in an intimate sense, a circular-letter to the friends of him who writes it.

To treat all subjects in the highest, the most honourable, and the pluckiest spirit, consistent with the fact, is the first duty of a writer. . . . In the humblest sort of literary work, we have it in our power either to do great harm or great good. We may seek merely to please; we may seek, having no higher gift, merely to gratify the idle nine-days' curiosity of our contemporaries; or we may essay, however feebly, to instruct. In each of these we shall have to deal with that remarkable art of words, which, because it is the dialect of life, comes home so easily and powerfully to the minds of men; and since that is so, we contribute, in each of these branches, to build up the sum of sentiments and appreciations which goes by the name of Public Opinion or Public Feeling.

. . . . . .

There are two duties incumbent upon any man who enters on the business of writing: truth to the fact and a good spirit in the treatment. . . . Those who write have to see that each man's knowledge is, as near as they can make it, answerable to the facts of life; that he shall not suppose himself an angel or a monster; nor take this world for a hell; nor be suffered to imagine that all rights are concentred in his own caste or country, or all veracities in his own parochial creed. Each man should learn what is within him, that he may strive to mend; he must be taught what is without him, that he may be kind to others. It can never be wrong to tell him the truth; for in his disputable state, weaving as he goes his theory of life, steering himself, cheering or reproving others, all facts are of the first importance to his conduct; and even if a fact shall discourage or corrupt him, it is still best that he should know it; for it is in this world as it is, and not in a world made easy by educational suppressions, that he must win his way to shame or glory. It must always be foul to tell what is false; and it can never be safe to suppress what is true. The very fact that you omit may be what somebody was wanting.

. . . .

An author who reposes in some narrow faith, cannot, if he would, express the whole or even many of the sides of this various existence; for his own life being maim, some of them are not admitted in his theory, and were only dimly and unwillingly recognised in his experience. Hence the smallness, the triteness, and the inhumanity in works of merely sectarian religion; and hence we find equal although unsimilar limitations in works inspired by the spirit of the flesh or the despicable taste for high society. So that the first duty of any man who is to write is intellectual. Designedly or not, he has so far set himself up for a leader of the minds of men; and he must see that his own mind is kept supple, charitable and bright. Everything but prejudice should find a voice through him; he should see the good in all things; where he has even a fear that he does not wholly understand, there he should be wholly silent; and he should recognise from the first that he has only one tool in his workshop, and that tool is sympathy.—*Fortnightly Review, April,* 1881: "*The Morality of the Profession of Letters.*"

Picture-Books in Winter.

Summer fading, winter comes—
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon ;
Still we find the flowing brooks
And the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,
Wait upon the children's eye
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are,
Seas and cities, near and far,
And the flying fairies' looks,
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,
Reading picture story-books?

A Child's Garden of Verses. 1885.

C. F. RICHARDSON (AMERICAN PROFESSOR).
b. 1851.

With young or old, there is no such helper towards the reading habit as the cultivation of this warm and undying feeling of the *friendliness* of books. . . . When one book has become a friend and fellow, the world has grown that much broader and more beautiful. Petrarch said of his books, considered as his friends: "I have friends, &c." *

* The reader will find the passage quoted at page 10 of this volume.

The great secret of reading consists in this, that it does not matter so much what we read, or how we read it, as what we think and how we think it. Reading is only the fuel; and, the mind once on fire, any and all material will feed the flame, provided only it have any combustible matter in it. And we cannot tell from what quarter the next material will come. The thought we need, the facts we are in search of, may make their appearance in the corner of the newspaper, or in some forgotten volume long ago consigned to dust and oblivion. Hawthorne, in the parlour of a country inn, on a rainy day, could find mental nutriment in an old directory. That accomplished philologist, the late Lord Strangford, could find ample amusement for an hour's delay at a railway-station in tracing out the etymology of the names in Bradshaw. . . .

A book that is worth reading all through, is pretty sure to make its worth known. There is something in the literary conscience which tells a reader whether he is wasting his time or not. An hour or a minute may be sufficient opportunity for forming a decision concerning the worth or worthlessness of the book. If it is utterly bad and valueless, then skip the whole of it, as soon as you have made the discovery. If a part is good and a part bad, accept the one and reject the other. If you are in doubt, take warning at the first intimation that you are misspending your opportunity and frittering away your time over an unprofitable book. Reading that is of questionable value is not hard to find out; it bears its notes and marks in unmistakable plainness, and it puts forth, all unwittingly, danger signals of which the reader should take heed.

The art of skipping is, in a word, the art of noting and shunning that which is bad, or frivolous, or misleading, or unsuitable for one's individual needs. If you are convinced that the book or the chapter is bad, you cannot drop it too quickly. If it is simply idle and foolish, put it away on that account,—unless you are properly seeking amusement from idleness and frivolity. If it is so deceitful and disingenuous, your task is not so easy, but your conscience will give you warning, and the sharp examination which should follow, will tell you that you are in poor literary company.

But there are a great many books which are good in themselves, and yet are not good at all times or for all readers. *No* book, indeed, is of universal value and appropriateness. As has been said in previous chapters of this series, the individual must always dare to remember that he has his own legitimate tastes and wants, and that it is not only proper to follow them, but highly improper to permit them to be overruled by the tastes and wants of others. It is right for one to neglect entirely, or to skip through, pages which another should study again and again. Let each reader ask himself: Why am I reading this? What service will it be to me? Am I neglecting something else that would be more beneficial? Here, as in every other question involved in the choice of books, the golden key to knowledge, a key that will only fit its own proper doors, is *purpose*. . . .

Admitting thus the utility of the reading of periodicals, and even insisting upon the necessity and duty of reading them, it must nevertheless be said in the plainest manner that an alarming amount of time is wasted over them, or worse than wasted. "To learn to choose what is valuable and to skip the rest" is a good rule for reading periodicals; and it is a rule whose observance will save time and strength for better intellectual employments,—to say nothing of the very important fact that discipline in this line will prevent the reader from falling into that demoralising and altogether disgraceful inability to hold the mind upon any continuous subject of thought or study, which is pretty sure to follow in the train of undue or thoughtless reading of periodicals. And when, as too often happens, a man comes to read nothing save his morning paper at breakfast or on the train, and his evening paper after his day's work is over, that man's brain, so far as reading is concerned, is only half alive. It cannot carry on a long train of thought or study; it notes superficial things rather than inner principles; it seeks to be amused or stimulated, rather than to be instructed.—*The Choice of Books.*

R. H. Stoddard (American Poet).

Better than men and women, friend,
  That are dust, though dear in our joy and pain,
Are the books their cunning hands have penned,
  For they depart, but the books remain;
Through these they speak to us what was best
  In the loving heart and the noble mind:
All their royal souls possessed
  Belongs forever to all mankind!
When others fail him, the wise man looks
To the sure companionship of books.

Atlantic Monthly, *June*, 1877.

WILLIS GAYLORD CLARK. *d.* 1841.

Somebody, I believe it is Dr. Johnson, pronounces books to be dull *friends*. They may be so; but they are glorious *companions*. They can not lend one money, but they can enrich his mind with incorruptible and inalienable affluence. They can confer in gorgeous profusion the vast estates of ideality—the dominion and principalities of thought. And while they impart an enjoyment in all respects equal to worldly riches, they inculcate no sordid selfishness; they never contract the heart; and they leave its general avenues unclogged by envy; unpolluted by pride; for knowledge ever humbles its votaries, even while it exalts them.—*The Literary Remains of the late Willis Gaylord Clark.* 1851, *New York.*

CYRUS HAMLIN (A RECENT AMERICAN WRITER).

We live by admiration, hope, and love. You can hardly take a better guide in your reading. What things to delight in with reverence, what things to hope for, and what things to love deeply and purely,—this is what you want from books and in books, just as from and in living persons. To pass through the simple experiences of human nature, the responsibilities, the hopes, the griefs as well as the goodnesses, that attach to our common lot; to taste them in their pureness, to bear them with quietness and courage, to do our work with all our heart—this is a great thing; to gain help for this is the great purpose in our reading, as in every friendship and all endeavour. And one of the chiefest blessings of books is that they bring to us the spirit of those who have felt the most deeply and acted the most manfully. They cannot take the place of actual experience, but they prepare for it. They interpret it to us; they bring to the light much that lies undiscerned in our own natures, and, rightly used, guide the way to the true fellowship of patient and noble living which makes all men akin.—*An Essay, "Plans of Reading," in "Hints for Home Reading, a series of chapters on Books and their Use." Putnam & Sons, New York.*

J. ROGERS REES. *b.* 1856.

We cannot well imagine a greater pleasure than to sit of a winter's evening by a cosy fireside deep in the pages of some favourite author. At such a season Ossian cannot fail to throw his spell around us; and the raging of the storm without and the rattle of the casement are but so many wild, weird choruses to his songs. Or on a summer's evening to lie lazily beside some babbling mountain-brook, letting the music of the wandering wind in the pines overhead mingle with the sweet voices that come to the soul from some healthy country-loving writer. In such a mood Thomson's *Seasons* becomes a veritable handbook.

. . . . . .

Reading is necessary to the daily progression that should inevitably attend every human being. We are so inclined to content ourselves with what is commonest, and the spirit and the senses so easily grow dead to the impressions of the beautiful and perfect, that everyone should study to nourish in his mind the faculty of feeling these things. "To this end," says Goethe, "one ought every day at least to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words." Pliny the Younger affirmed that he never read a book so bad, but he drew some profit from it.

. . . . .

Literature is also a true friend in distress; a friend indeed in cases of need. "As the ivy which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs, so is it beautifully ordained that 'literature,' which is the mere dependant and ornament of man in his happier days, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity, winding itself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart." Coleridge's testimony is on record: "Under the pressure of long and painful disease, poetry has been to me its own exceeding great reward; it has soothed my afflictions, it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments, it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me." The ability to lose one's self at will in the world of imaginative creation has saved many a lover of literature from hours of unnecessary care and sorrow, enabling him to ignore difficulties under which he would otherwise have been crushed.—*The Pleasures of a Bookworm.*

JAMES WILLIAMS. *b.* 1850.

My Books.

Not a valuable set,
  Does it follow therefore
That I may not have a pet
  Book or two to care for?
Tell me, does a man of sense
Judge of books by their expense?

How, alas! can I afford
  Precious vellum covers
Stamped with badge of prince or lord
  Or of royal lovers?
Long must be their purse who gain
Specimens of Roger Payne.

Some begin but never end,
  Some have no beginning,
Some are tattered and transcend
  All the arts of pinning.
Children love with love most warm
Dolls with least of human form.

Some are clean, the average
  Are a trifle dirty,
Time is apt to soil a page
  Say of sixteen-thirty.
Shall I value comrades less
For their unbecoming dress?

Some are Latin, some are Greek,
  Some are French and Spanish,
One or two can even speak
  Portuguese or Danish.
(Names of nations must at times
Be content with "printers' rimes.")

Here is farce or comedy,
  Here grave verse like Dante's,
Bacon or Pascal may be
  Neighbours of Cervantes;
Books like strangers in a street
Know not whom they chance to meet.

Delicate Italian charm,
  Sagas grim from Sweden,
Songs that breathe a holy calm
  Like the calm of Eden,
Scarce a page that has not taught
Something worthy to be thought.

Most of them are of the past,
  Of a bygone fashion,
Some of them are deeply cast
  In a mould of passion,
Others treat the world and men
With a Rabelaisian pen.

Many a book of olden time
  Opens with a sonnet,
Once no work appeared but rime
  Must be written on it,
'Twas no credit to compose
Flatteries in humble prose.

Comrades, let me dwell with you,
  Hear your sobs and laughter,
Men have never been as true,
  Will they be hereafter?
None knows solitude who spends
Life with books when books are friends.

A Lawyer's Leisure.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE. *b.* 1866.

Ad Libros.

(HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED)

When do I love you most, sweet books of mine?
  In strenuous morns when o'er your leaves I pore,
  Austerely bent to win austerest lore,
Forgetting how the dewy meadows shine;
On afternoons when honeysuckles twine
  About the seat, and to some dreamy shore
  Of old Romance, where lovers evermore
Keep blissful hours, I follow at your sign?

Yea! ye are precious then, but most to me
  Ere lamplight dawneth, when low croons the fire
    To whispering twilight in my little room,
And eyes read not, but, sitting silently,
  I feel your great hearts throbbing deep in quire,
    And hear your breathing round me in the gloom.

[*Mr. Le Gallienne is the author of "My Ladies' Sonnets," "The Bookman's Avalon," "A Ballad of Bindings," "Who has not loved an Elzevir?" &c.*]

ANONYMOUS AUTHORS.

Book-love is a home-feeling—a sweet bond of family union—and a never-failing source of domestic enjoyment. It sheds a charm over the quiet fireside, unlocks the hidden sympathies of human hearts, beguiles the weary hours of sickness or solitude, and unites kindred spirits in a sweet companionship of sentiment and idea.

. . . . . .

Book-love is the good angel that keeps watch by the poor man's hearth, and hallows it; saving him from the temptations that lurk beyond its charmed circle; giving him new thoughts and noble aspirations, and lifting him, as it were, from the mere mechanical drudgery of his every-day occupation. The wife blesses it, as she sits smiling and sewing, alternately listening to her husband's voice, or hushing the child upon her knee. She blesses it for keeping him near her, and making him cheerful, and manly, and kind-hearted,—albeit understanding little of what he reads, and reverencing it for that reason all the more in him.

. . . . . .

There are some books which forcibly recall calm and tranquil scenes of by-gone happiness. We hear again the gentle tones of a once familiar voice long since hushed. We can remember the very passage where the reader paused awhile to play the critic, or where that eloquent voice suddenly faltered. . . . Books read for the first time at some particular place or period of our existence may thus become hallowed for evermore, or we love them because others loved them also in by-gone days.

Books written by those with whom it has been our happy privilege to dwell in close companionship and sweet interchange of sentiment and idea are exceedingly precious. In reading them, we converse, as it were, with the author in his happiest mood, recognise the rare eloquence to which we have often sat and listened spell-bound, and feel proud to find our affectionate and reverential homage confirmed by the unanimous plaudits of the world. The golden key, before mentioned, has been given into our keeping, and we unlock at will the sacred and hidden recesses of Genius and association.—*Fraser's Magazine*, 1847: "*Book-Love.*"

Reading will not be the less recreative for being methodical. Desultoriness is more to be dreaded than routine. The latter need not be mechanical: the former must always be unproductive. A man may never become a scientific investigator or a profound linguist; he may abandon the hope of enlightening the world with the announcement of some new theory of political economy, or the discovery of some new species of foraminifera; and yet, through assiduous devotion to a few good authors, he may acquire a breadth of view and a refinement of taste that will make his life as instructive and stimulating as any book he himself could possibly have written. He may not have the opportunity of listening to scientific lectures, and may never compose an essay for a mutual improvement society, or send an article to a magazine. Yet in his own domestic circle he may find an audience that will always hang upon his lips when he retails the results of his reading, pointing some commonplace moral with an apt and striking illustration, or enforcing fatherly counsel by some wise man's weighty apophthegms. Better still will it be if the example become contagious, and the reading father should train up a reading family; if the habit of reading aloud be early fostered, together with the still more valuable habit of free discussion of the topics broached. Such habits as these, besides displacing the vacuity and isolation of home-life in great cities, or the scandals and jealousies of home-life in small towns and villages, would bind together the members of a family by ties more durable than those of sordid self-interest, and enable it to realise its dignity as a small but important unit of a great social system. The past and the future would thus be linked by the profitable engagements of the present; and the accumulation of such units, as of the sand on the sea-shore, would present a breakwater to the waves of barbarism more effectual than the academies of the ancient world, the monasteries of mediævalism, or even the educational appliances—from universities to primary schools—of modern times.—"*Books and Book-hunting*," *London Quarterly Review*, *October*, 1881.

It is really an appalling thing to think of the people who have no books. Can we picture to ourselves a home without these gentle friends? Can we imagine a life dead to all the gracious influences of sweet thoughts sweetly spoken, of tender suggestions tenderly whispered, of holy dreams, glowing play of fancy, unexpected reminding of subtle analogies and unsuspected harmonies, and those swift thoughts which pierce the heart like an arrow, and fill us with a new sense of what we are and what we may be? Yet there are thousands and tens of thousands of homes where these influences never reach, where the whole of the world is hard, cruel fact unredeemed by hope or illusion, with the beauty of the world shut out and the grace of life destroyed. It is only by books that most men and women can lift themselves above the sordidness of life. No books! Yet for the greater part of humanity that is the common lot. We may, in fact, divide our fellow-creatures into two branches—those who read books and those who do not.

. . . . . .

We do not sufficiently realise what is meant by this cheapness of literature. It means that the most delightful amusement—the chief recreation of the civilised world—the pursuit which raises the mind above the sordid conditions of life, gives ideas, unfolds possibilities, inspires noble thoughts, or presents pleasing images—is a thing which may be procured in sufficient quantity for a whole household for three, four, or five guineas a year—judiciously managed, and by arrangement with other families, for three guineas a year;—administered in the way of a subscription, it represents nothing less than the recreation of a whole family for a twelvemonth. What an investment!—*Temple Bar*, 1881: "*On the Buying of Books.*"

Books themselves, after long companionship, come to have an actual personality for many of us. They are to me "a substantial world," in more senses than Wordsworth's. The material tangible volume becomes a personal friend,—like the familiar walking-stick, or well-accustomed pipe. The very leather and lettering form themselves into a countenance—sometimes quite as expressive as some of those which belong to our human flesh-and-blood companions. . . . Let me confess that I have a distinct affection for my books wholly independent of any literary gratification to be derived from them. Some of those which I could least bear to part with are books which I never have read, and know that I never shall read, in the flesh. Just as one can sit in silence with an old and intimate friend, or walk by his side with a quiet satisfaction, without caring to be continually chattering, and the feeling of companionship is none the less real because each is pursuing at the moment his own separate line of thought;—so it is with some of the occupants of my study-shelves. I look lovingly at their honest faces (I have already said that a book's face lies in its back), wearing the same familiar aspect that they have worn for years; I know that there is good stuff there within, should I ever have occasion for its use, and am perfectly content with this kind of inheritance *in posse*. Good heavens! how many dear old friends have we all, from whom a three days' visit would be utterly insupportable, if they were bound to give utterance, and we to listen, during all that time, to all that is in their excellent hearts; or if we were bound to keep them incessantly in conversation! And what a thinning there would be both of books and booksellers, if no one was allowed to possess or hire a book which he did not mean to read!

So it becomes an increasing delight to me, the lazier I grow in the matter of actual reading, to sit in my arm-chair in the little room which is called my "Study," and look round at the faces (miscalled the backs) of my old friends who are ranged round its four walls.—*Blackwood's Magazine, vol.* cxviii., *Sept.,* 1875: "*In My Study Chair; The Companionship of Books.*"

One of the pleasantest pictures to be found within the whole range of the inner life of the working classes, is the winter evening at home of a working-class family, the head of which is a reading man. He is generally a man of some taste and refinement, who has found for himself a partner in life who shares those feelings. He is steady, and therefore pretty sure of constant work. Reading affords him an intellectual pleasure that is a safeguard to him against less rational, less healthy, and more costly (so-called) pleasures, so that his earnings can be devoted in their entirety to the comfort of his home, his family, and himself. He cannot, it is true, have a study to himself, nor does he want one, any attempt to set up one would be affectation upon his part. His living room is orderly, and bright, and cheerful. When he has washed, finished tea, donned his loose house-coat, and easy slippers, he can sit himself down, book in hand, sure of a pleasant evening. He is a sufficiently earnest reader to be able to so concentrate his attention upon his book, that a little conversation between his wife, and say a daughter who is helping her with her needlework, will not distract him, or make him irritable. At the same time he must not be a selfish, that is, an altogether silent reader, nor is he. As he comes upon them he will read to the others some glowing passage of history, some thrilling piece of poetry, some wise or tender saying, some pathetic episode from a biography, or incident from fiction. Sometimes, indeed, a man will in a course of evening readings, read right through a book to his family, and in this way some of them acquire the rather rare accomplishment of reading well aloud.—*Good Words*, 1876: "*Readers and Reading*," *by the* "*Journeyman Engineer*."

We entertain the profoundest veneration for works of the imagination, and we hope we should be the last to under-estimate their value. But we venerate and value them on one condition: that they raise man not only from the slough of despond, but from the mire of selfish aims, of ignoble desires, cynical beliefs, and purely material views of existence. Works of imagination must operate as a perpetual *sursum corda*, an invitation to us to lift up our hearts, in the midst of so much that is painfully calculated to depress them and induce them to grovel. . . . The imagination is the true refuge against experience; its medicine, its corrective, which restores to it tone, health, and energy. Life is disenchanting, no doubt. Then be enchanted again, by surrendering yourself to the true wizards, who compel you to believe in goodness, even though you have met it so rarely; to love nobleness, even though your own few noble actions have been ignobly rewarded; to place the spirit above matter, virtue above interest, and to prefer martyrdom to any triumph attained unworthily.

It has often been urged that works of imagination, such as we here describe, have a dangerous tendency: since they encourage hopes which are never fulfilled, nourish nothing but illusions, and by bringing into yet more definite contrast what might be and ought to be, and what is, engender a discontent with life as it exists. But it is the very business of imagination, rightly directed, to generate a discontent with life as it exists: since life as it exists requires much changing, or at least much modification; and provided the discontent, which is in itself just and elevated, be not in its effects barren, do not become moody, misanthropical, and indifferent to the welfare of mankind, it is highly desirable that it should be felt. It is the placid satisfaction with the most unsatisfactory arrangements, which the absence of imagination and what is called the practical temperament beget, that is our real danger and bane.

. . . . . .

See people get into railway carriages. They are going to travel through a delightful country, clad in all the witching garb of vernal beauty, in summer's magnificent array, in autumn's almost tropical gorgeousness, or in the weird and solemn but deeply interesting and suggestive aspect of winter. They buy a wretched volume of what is called "American humour," or, oh! ye gods! a newspaper: a newspaper that contains nothing new, and is probably only another version of one they have already perused, or an evening *rechauffé* of the two. That they should contemplate the divine face of Nature, that they should rejoice in the flowery tracery of the hedgerows, in the reedy, sedgy pools, in the swaying corn, in the undulations caused by rise and dip and hollow, all with their special lights and shades; in the half-darkness of bits of well-grown wood; in the growing thickness of young plantations which catch the sunbeams and keep them in a net of half-invisible green and gold,—never seems to occur to them. They esconce themselves as deep as they can in their stuffy cushions, try to persuade themselves that they are indoors, pull out their paper-cutters, draw their hats over their brows, and imbibe their newspaper or their meaningless book of jokes. If it be late evening or night, they light a reading-lamp, and continue the enervating pursuit. As for thinking, by way of a change, that is out of the question. When they do not read, they sleep; or if they neither read nor sleep, they try to talk. Railway travelling is well calculated to lower considerably one's estimate of one's species.—*Temple Bar, Sept.*, 1874: "*The Vice of Reading.*"

Old Books.

. . . .

Fit solace, food, and friends more sure
To have around one, always handy,
When sinking spirits find no cure
In news, election brawls, or brandy.

In these old books, more soothing far
Than balm of Gilead or Nepenthè,
I seek an antidote for care—
Of which most men indeed have plenty.

"Five hundred times at least," I've said—
My wife assures me—"I would never

Buy more old books;" yet lists are made,
And shelves are lumbered more than ever.

Ah! that our wives could only see
How well the money is invested
In these old books, which seem to be
By them, alas! so much detested.

There's nothing hath enduring youth,
Eternal newness, strength unfailing,
Except old books, old friends, old truth,
That's ever battling—still prevailing.

'T is better in the past to live
Than grovel in the present vilely,
In clubs, and cliques, where placemen hive,
And faction hums, and dolts rank highly.

To be enlightened, counselled, led,
By master minds of former ages,
Come to old books—consult the dead—
Commune with silent saints and sages.

Leave me, ye gods! to my old books—
Polemics yield to sects that wrangle—
Vile "parish politics" to folks
Who love to squabble, scheme, and jangle.

Dearly beloved old pigskin tomes!
Of dingy hue—old bookish darlings!
Oh, cluster ever round my rooms,
And banish strifes, disputes, and snarlings.

From the appendix of "How to Read a Book in the Best Way." New York, n.d.

Pedantry is not a danger that threatens those who read scientifically, who get at the bottom of their subject, and who have acquired by much meditation a true insight. The pedant is the man who understands not what he reads in its proportions and in its relations to the rest of knowledge. The man "with loads of learned lumber in his head" is the man who has never had the wit to co-ordinate his knowledge; and his dulness is no more a reproach to genuine learning than the shallowness of the superficial man is a reproach to desultory reading. He who reads with method and uses his mind as well as his memory as he reads, will gain advantage whether he sticks to one definite line of study or whether he passes from book to book, from one topic to another and another in only slight connexion with it. But, at the present time, there is no doubt where the chief danger lies. The temptation to become overloaded with learning may be too much for one; the temptation to skim superficially over a wide stretch of knowledge is too much for thousands. We must admit that one great danger to concentration of mind lies now-a-days in the periodical press. Cowper draws a picture of the good and evil of the Press of Cowper's day; and if things were thus a hundred years ago, how much more real are the dangers now, when newspapers and magazines are a hundred times as numerous and at least ten times as attractive as they were then? Every day the whole course of the world, so to speak, is pictured anew for the reader in the columns of his newspaper; every week and every month the same thing is done again for him in his magazine in a more ambitious, a less rapid, and a more would-be philosophical way. How is a man, especially a young man who has not yet secured the steadying ballast which a long course of severe reading gives, to keep himself from being carried here and there by every wind of doctrine, every current of opinion? How is he to keep his mind clear, his attention fixed on any definite line of thought? How, to one so nourished, are even years to "bring the philosophic mind?" This danger, inevitable as it is, is perhaps the most serious of all those that threaten the modern mind. Information on all conceivable subjects is instantly ready to hand; and mankind forgets, in laying hold upon it, that information gained so easily is of no educational value unless it is supported on a foundation of ordered knowledge.—*The "Times," November* 4, 1885.

After carelessly looking at a volume which has stood on the shelves for years, we open it and find within thoughts which appeal to our deepest experiences, high incentives to our nobler energies, deep sympathy in our sorrows, sustaining words to help us on with our life-work. How differently do we ever after regard the visible of that book! The invisible has been revealed to us, and we almost wonder whether, if we had looked into it two or three years before, we should have found there what we now prize so much. Perhaps not; for after different experiences in life come different revelations from books. The pages which a few years ago we might have glanced over with indifference, now speak to us as if uttering the emotions of our own souls. Sometimes it is a work of fiction which we open for the first time, the title of which has been familiar to our eyes. Out of it invisible spirits walk. We are introduced to charming people who never existed, and yet who become our daily companions. We go with them through many trials, we rejoice with them, we know all their secrets, and share with them many of our own. Is it possible that, shut up between those covers, long unknown, all these existed which have since made life brighter and better to us?—*Atlantic Monthly: "The Visible and Invisible in Libraries," November*, 1855.

An Invocation in a Library.

. . . .

In these still alcoves give us gentle meeting,
  From dusky shelves kind arms about us fold,
Till the New Age shall feel her cold heart beating
  Restfully on the warm heart of the Old:

Till we shall hear your voices, mild and winning
  Steal through our doubt and discord, as outswells,
At fiercest noon, above a city's dinning,
  The chiming music of cathedral bells:

Music that lifts the thought from trodden places,
  And coarse confusions that around us lie,
Up to the calm of high, cloud-silvered spaces,
  Where the tall spire points through the soundless sky.

Oberon and Puck, New York, 1885.

"Thank God for books," said Sydney Smith; and who that has known what it is to depend on them for companionship but will say from his heart, "Amen"? In lone country houses, where friends are few; in crowded city streets, amid greetings where no kindness is, thank God for books! Dearest, best of friends; soothing, comforting, teaching, carrying us far away from the "briars of this working-day world;" never importunate, never impatient, may we learn to use you as you use us!—*Macmillan's Magazine, vol.* i., 1860: "*Books and their Uses,*" *by* "*Doubleday.*"

People who can go through a country churchyard with an unmoved and stolid unconsciousness must have dull souls. There is something of the same impressiveness or pathos as one stands in the midst of the written memorials of accumulated human effort and labour and genius. The student may sigh as he thinks what toil and hope and intrepid purpose confronts him on the shelves of his own library, where a volume stands for the single monument and relic of the life of a man. A churl may jeer as he reflects how many a man has scorned delights and lived laborious days to leave a volume which few people possess, and none ever think of looking into. But one of a higher temper finds this rather a tender thought than an excuse for a scoff. He feels at least that 'tis pity if 'tis true. Besides, the mere presence of a book on a shelf shows that the effort which it represents has not wholly spent itself. We know not what spark of thought a mere glance at its title on the cover may strike out in a ready mind. Anyhow, it is no more matter for cynical jest than the author's gravestone. The book is dead, so is the man who wrote it, but both in their time may have set some fine forces in motion, which have communicated some continuing impulse all through space. We can never exactly measure and apportion the energy which either man or book may have set in motion. The deadest book of old time is at least as interesting as an old suit of armour; a man has once lived and done his stroke of fighting inside of it. And in books that are not dead, which give us ideas or give us mere pleasure, there is even a certain religiosity. The mere presence of certain books is suggestive, and reminds us how, here even more than elsewhere, other men labour, and we enter into the fruit of their labour. Nobody feels so deeply the debt which a man owes to the best and wisest of his fellows, dead or living, as the scholar who feels towards his books as towards his more fleshly friends. It is only a sentiment, but it is not sterile. It is not a forced paradox to say that a man may some times be far more profitably employed in surveying his bookshelves in meditative mood, than if he were to pull this or that volume down and take to reading it; just as two friends may hold sweeter converse in perfect silence together than if they were talking all the time.—*Saturday Review, October* 12, 1867: "*The Companionship of Books.*"

With increase of knowledge has come increasing refinement and weightiness of style. For style, in the true sense of the word, is not something which can be taught. It is, or ought to be, the finest flower of a man's intellectual growth. He arrives at it by laborious processes of choice and selection; the more he knows, the less liable he is to exaggeration; the more ready are his illustrations, the easier his erudition. The richer and more varied is his material, the more intricate and lovely will be the pattern into which he is able to throw it.—*Newspaper Article.*

A WOMAN'S TRIBUTE TO BOOKS.

(From "The Spectator," December 10th, 1881.)

Sir,—Surely that is a sad article of yours in the *Spectator* of December 3rd on "Cheaper Books." You say, "As to the average Englishman, he simply hates buying books . . . and sometimes, in his eagerness to borrow, performs acts of incredible meanness. We have known authors asked to lend their own copies, by men of ten times their income;" and so on, in the same sad strain.

That, Sir, may be true of some, but surely not of all. I am a very "average" Englishwoman, and yet almost the keenest pleasure of my whole life has been to buy books. When I have made acquaintance with a noble, good, and beautiful book, I could not rest until it was mine,—my very own. The years roll back as I write, and I see myself, five-and-twenty of them ago, young, and just married. We had very foolishly married without and against the consent of our parents, and they (God bless them!—they are here no more) thought, I fancy, to unmarry us, by a process of starvation. Many a time (my husband dining at an eating-house) did I eat only dry bread for dinner, all the while guarding and treasuring up—chiefly tied in a corner of my handkerchief for safety, fearing, if discovered, it would go in beef and mutton—a sovereign given me by a cousin, and which I destined to the purchase of "Boswell's Life of Johnson." I had to wait five months ere opportunity favoured me, and not until I had been some time at the Cape of Good Hope did I triumphantly carry home my volumes. But when at last I held them as my own in my eager hands, what were exile, and poverty, and vexation, in comparison?

Sir, every book on my shelves is dear to me, for every book means a sacrifice. But for what an end! In my many sorrows, they—my books—have been unfailing in kindness and comfort. In foolishness they have given wisdom and guidance, they have been strength to my weakness, have helped me to help others, and in their possession has been deep joy; and what is more, they have removed far from my home and from my heart that sore sorrow and trial of woman's life,—loneliness.

It is to me a small matter that I have mostly fed poorly and dressed plainly, since, by so doing, I have been enabled to gather under my roof the great and noble of the earth, who look down at me from my walls with the faces of friends. Had I (would to God I could have!) the boon of life once more I should, so far as the blessed acquisition of books goes, live it all over again.—I am, Sir, &c., E. S.

The Solace of Books.

O finest essence of delicious rest!
  To bid for some short space the busy mill
  Of anxious, ever-grinding thought be still;
And let the weary brain and throbbing breast
Be by another's cooling hand caressed.
  This volume in my hand, I hold a charm
  Which lifts me out of reach of wrong or harm.
I sail away from trouble; and most blessed
Of every blessing, can myself forget:
  Can rise above the instance low and poor
Into the mighty law that governs yet.
  This hingèd cover, like a well hung door,
Shuts out the noises of the jangling day,
These fair leaves fan unwelcome thoughts away.

Spectator, January 16, 1886.

◆

BOOK-BORROWERS.

Ménage says: "The first thing one ought to do, after having borrowed a book, is to read it, so as to be able to return it as soon as possible."

Toinard pungently remarks that "The reason why borrowed books are seldom returned, is because it is easier to retain the books themselves than what is inside of them."

In a book-plate of the last century, the owner of the book has the following pertinent quotation from the Psalms:—"It is the wicked that borroweth, and payeth not again."

The following suggestion occurs in a newspaper article:—"If ever a new religion is able to impose new festivals and fast-days on the human race, it is to be hoped that A SOLEMN WEEK OF RETURNING BOOKS TO THEIR OWNERS will every year precede the Feast of Property."

A correspondent of *The Times* thus writes on the day after the commencement of the Parcel Post:—"A new idea often serves as a tonic to the relaxed conscience. If, while the joy of the new Parcel Post is fully on them, folks would only turn out their cupboards and examine their bookshelves for volumes long borrowed and never returned, they would probably set in motion for the time being the largest circulating library in the world, and administer consolation to tens of thousands of long despondent rightful owners."

INDEX.

	PAGE
Addison, Joseph	107
Aikin, Dr. John	124
Alcott, A. Bronson	266
Alexandrian Library	1
Allatius, Leo	53
Alonzo of Arragon	32
Anonymous Authors	485
Arnold, Dr.	260
Arnott, Dr.	230
Ascham, Roger	18
Axon, William E. A.	468
Bacon, Lord	28
Bailey, Philip James	357
Barrow, Dr. Isaac	86
Bartholin, Thomas V.	82
Baxter, Rev. Richard	72
Bedford, Earl of	71
Beecher, Rev. Henry Ward	348
Bennoch, Francis	344
Blount, Charles	101
Book-Borrowers	503
Bray, Charles	346
Bright, John	338
Brougham, Lord	225
Brown, Dr. John	335
Browne, Sir Thomas	61
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett	320
Bruyère, John de la	98
Brydges, Sir Samuel Egerton	137
Burke, Edmund	120
Burton, Robert	45

PAGE
Burton, Dr. John Hill 321
Bury, Bishop Richard de 7
Buxton, Charles 396
Butler, Edward 428
Byron, Lord 229

Cameron, John 343
Carlyle, Thomas 246
Carr, Frank (Launcelot Cross) 442
Cecil, Richard 130
Chambers, William 275
Chambers, Robert 282
Chandos, Lord 52
Channing, Dr. W. E. 193
Charpentier, Francis 82
Chaucer, Geoffrey 12
Chesterfield, Lord 112
Chevrean, Urban 71
Cicero 3
Clarendon, Earl of 65
Clark, Willis Gaylord 479
Clarke, Mary Cowden- 328
Clarke, Rev. J. Freeman 471
Cobbett, William 136
Cobden, Richard 310
Cockburn, Chief Justice 287
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 155
Coleridge, Hartley 261
Collier, Rev. Jeremy 98
Collyer, Rev. Robert 401
Colton, Rev. Charles C. 192
Congreve, William 106
Cook, Eliza 363
Cotton, Charles 91
Cowley, Abraham 76
Cowper, William 121
Crabbe, George 132
Crossley, James 278

	PAGE
Daniel, Samuel	31
Davenant, Sir William	61
Dawson, George	391
Dibdin, C. Frognall	193
Diderot, Denys	118
Disraeli, Isaac	141
Disraeli, Benjamin (Lord Beaconsfield)	312
Divine, A Seventeenth Century	98
Dobson, Austin	472
Dodd, Rev. William	120
Earle, Dr. John	61
Early English Writer	69
Emerson, Ralph Waldo	300
Erasmus, Desiderius	16
Evans, Marian (George Eliot)	388
Feltham, Owen	68
Fénélon, Archbishop	101
Ferriar, Dr. John	141
Fletcher, John	45
Florio, John	27
Foster, John	148
Freeland, William	466
Friswell, James Hain	405
Fuller, Dr. Thomas	63
Fuller, Thomas, M.D.	103
Gale, Roger	106
Gallienne, Richard Le	484
Gellius, Aulus	5
Genlis, Countess de	124
Gibbon, Edward	123
Gilfillan, Rev. George	345
Gladstone, William Ewart	329
Godwin, William	133
Goethe, J. Wolfgang von	126
Goldsmith, Oliver	119

PAGE
Goschen, George J. 448
Green, Matthew 113
Guevara, Antonio de 33

Hacket, Bishop 51
Hale, Sir Matthew 66
Hales, John 50
Hall, Bishop Joseph 36
Hall, John 84
Halley, Edmund 97
Hamerton, Philip Gilbert 431
Hamlin, Cyrus 479
Hare, Rev. Julius C. 245
Harrison, Frederic 415
Havergal, Frances R. 466
Hazlitt, William 172
Helps, Sir Arthur 359
Herder, J. G. von 130
Herschel, Sir John 238
Hillard, George S. 315
Hindu Saying 6
Holmes, Dr. Oliver Wendell 323
Hood, Thomas 265
Horace 4
Houghton, Lord (R. M. Milnes) 332
Huet, Bishop 92
Hugo, Victor 288
Hume, David 117
Hunt, Leigh 197

Iddesleigh, Earl 363
Inchbald, Elizabeth 131
Irving, Washington 196

Johnson, Dr. Samuel 115
Jones, Sir William 123
Jonson, Ben 42

PAGE
Kempis, Thomas à 13
Kenyon, John 234
Kingsley, Rev. Charles 367
Knight, Charles 235

Laing, Samuel 337
Lamb, Charles 163
Lamont, Alexander 467
Landor, Walter Savage 171
Lang, Andrew 470
Langford, J. A. 399
Leighton, Robert 397
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 120
Locke, John 94
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth 314
Lonsdale, John (Lord Viscount) 101
Lowell, James Russell 379
Lubbock, Sir John 453
Luther, Martin 18
Lylye, John 28
Lytton, Lord (E. L. Bulwer) 293
Lytton, Earl (Owen Meredith) 430

Macaulay, Lord 270
Machiavelli, Niccolo 18
Mackenzie, Sir George 97
Mahon, Lord 236
Mancini, Dominico 11
Maurice, Rev. Frederick Denison 311
Ménage, Gilles 69
Middleton, Dr. Conyers 110
Miller, Hugh 280
Milton, John 64
Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley 111
Montaigne, Michel de 24
Montesquieu, Baron 111
Moore, Dr. John 121

	PAGE
Morley, John	456
Moulin, Peter du	59
Nierembergius, Jean Eusèbe	55
Norris, Rev. John, of Bemerton	103
Norton, Mrs. Caroline	318
Osborne, Francis	67
Overbury, Sir Thomas	49
Owen, Dr. John	75
Palmer, Samuel	312
Parker, Rev. Theodore	334
Parton, Sara P. (Fanny Fern)	351
Pattison, Mark	353
Paul, C. Kegan	406
Paul, St.	6
Payn, James	445
Peacock, Thomas Love	224
Persian, Sayings from the	6-7
Petrarca, Francesco	9
Phillips, George S. (January Searle)	355
Plato	2
Pliny, the Younger	6
Plutarch	5
Pope, Alexander	110
Porré, Gilbert de	42
Prayer, Book of Common	28
Procter, Bryan Waller (Barry Cornwall)	228
Quincey, Thomas de	224
Quintilian	5
Rands, W. H. (Matthew Browne)	412
Reed, Henry	319
Rees, J. Rogers	480
Rhodiginus, Balthasar Bonifacius	52

PAGE
Richardson, Charles F. 475
Richter, Jean Paul F. 140
Ringelbergius, J. Fortius 14
Rioja, Francesco di 59
Robertson, Rev. Frederick William 358
Rochefoucauld, Duc de la 71
Roscoe, William 131
Rousseau, Jean Jacques 117
Ruskin, John 369

Saxe, John G. 359
Scaliger, Joseph 35
Schiller, Friedrich 134
Schopenhauer, Arthur 231
Scott, Walter 154
Seneca 4
Shaftesbury, Earl of 281
Shakespeare, William 32
Shelley, Percy Bysshe 264
Shenstone, William 119
Sherbrooke, Lord (Robert Lowe) 342
Sheridan, Thos. 109
Shirley, James 56
Sidney, Sir Philip 28
Smith, Alexander 408
Socrates 1
Solomon 1
Song, Old English 52
Sorbière, Samuel 68
South, Dr. Robert 96
Southey, Robert 157
Steele, Sir Richard 107
Sterne, Laurence 118
Stevenson, Robert Louis 472
Stoddard, R. H. 478
Summer, Charles 343
Swift, Jonathan 106
Sylvester, Joshua 35

PAGE
Talfourd, Judge 260
Taylor, Isaac 226
Taylor, Bishop Jeremy 70
Temple, Sir William 84
Thackeray, W. Makepeace 337
Thirlwall, Bishop 262
Thomson, James 114
Toinard, M. 70
Trevelyan, Sir G. O. 455
Trollope, Anthony 352
Tuckney, Antony 58

Vaughan, Henry 83
Voltaire, François M. A. de 113

Waller, Sir William 56
Walpole, Horace 119
Watts, Dr. Isaac 109
Wesley, John 115
Whately, Archbishop 226
Whichcote, Dr. Benjamin 67
Whipple, Edwin P. 368
Whitman, Walt 384
Whittier, J. G. 316
Williams, James 482
Willmott, Rev. Robert Aris 318
Woman's, A, Tribute to Books 500
Wither, George 54
Wordsworth, William 153
Writer, A Sixteenth Century 36
Wyttenbach, Daniel 124

Yriarte, Tomas de 131

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